

Fig. 9

## Sestina in Season

WHEN it all started and the omnipotent gesture  
Planted the Garden of Eden green in its setting  
Of typical Middle-eastern desert, all  
That *Genesis* says has little to do with the season.  
But it takes some months for an apple to grow on  
a tree,  
Which makes one inclined to believe it may have been  
Spring.

Something is always *going* to happen in Spring,  
As it was in Eden. I don't mean Nature's gesture  
Of leafing through the country, tree by tree,  
But the all-pervasive and thoroughly upsetting  
Whiff of the future in this uneasy season.  
It is worse when nothing happens after all.

Crises can come at Christmas; almost all  
World wars begin in the Autumn; Summer can  
spring  
A pretty fair surprise; at any season  
A Chancellor can drown with the popular gesture  
Of a penny off something the noise of his tax-men  
setting  
Their cruel taxes into some family tree;

The Fall, of course, came in the Fall, if the Tree  
Of Knowledge obeyed mere natural laws at all,  
Which makes one think of it in an English setting  
With yellow elm-leaves on the pool by the spring  
And barer branches visibly starting to gesture  
Beneath the wind that sweeps away the season.

In Spring, though, something *will* happen. One must season  
One's natural feelings with hope. As the axle-tree  
Of time creaks over, Luck may possibly gesture  
In this direction for once, turn jovial,  
Finger the panelled year for a hidden spring,  
And lo! not one gold egg but the whole setting.

But if it is disaster, even our setting  
Cultures might find a meaning this last season  
As the end of all things flexes for the spring;  
In something the same way that a falling tree,  
After a lifetime of mere pastoral,  
Discovers suddenly the tragic gesture.

(And you, sir: digest<sup>\*</sup> your food: eschew upsetting  
Thoughts, if you think at all: spend a sober season:  
And never climb a tree, not even in Spring.)

PETER DICKINSON

Charivaria ...

April 17, 1957

**P**ERHAPS a sign of the industrial times as conclusive as any was the way in which last week's headline, "B.O.A.C. Men Accept Rise," was automatically interpreted by readers as a victory for management.

#### Whanne that Aprille . . .

WITH Mr. Philip Toynbee at its head an eight-person pilgrimage has left Manchester for Strasbourg to protest against assorted aggressions, its rank and file composed (according to reports) of two students, a woman librarian, a farmer, a shorthand-typist, an Indian dancer and a London solicitor. The mixed bag of occupations can hardly be fortuitous, and it is pleasant to think of the seven hundred miles hastening by as the students make notes for future television appearances on the fly-leaves of books brought along by the librarian, while the shorthand-typist records Mr. Toynbee's rough ideas for becoming a twentieth century Chaucer, the farmer exploits his skill in living off the country and the Indian dancer provides the necessary seasoning of light relief. That leaves the solicitor, who will of course be keeping a sharp professional eye open for any actionable paragraphs.

#### Purple Passage

WHEN a television commentator said "—" the other evening the B.B.C.'s switchboards ran hot for some considerable time; most complainants, it is



understood, said that if that was the best that TV could do in the way of sensational entertainment they might as well save the licence money and rely on modern novels from the circulating library.

#### No Mouths to Feed

THERE are so many opportunities to snipe at government policy and practice

that it is only right to give honour where honour is due. Nothing could have been more ingenious, for instance, than the recent tactics of Mr. Sandys. He made his announcement of generous increases in rations for the Forces—and gained a nation's applause—a week before his announcement that in future there would be no Forces to eat them.

#### No Fun Lip-Reading

TUMULT and shouting over the wisdom of B.B.C. sound-radio re-organization will continue for many a newspaper correspondence yet, and at the end of it all no one will have decided whether or not it is right, progressive, good business, plain recognition of the customer's requirements or any other sort of sense to promote vision over sound at last. What the listener-viewer can't deny, however, especially if his television receiver has an independent



volume control, is that voices without faces have done pretty well for thirty years, but faces without voices wouldn't last a fortnight.

#### Good Sport Ahead?

WITH the polo season almost upon us the gossip writers are pointing out that a certain amount of practice is already taking place in Cowdray Park. None of them has so far given a paragraph to the preliminary chukkers taking place at the headquarters of the Lord's Day Observance Society.

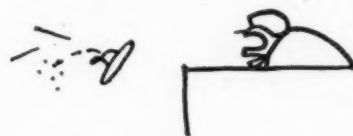
#### Vote of No Confidence

AFTER years of attacks on landlordism, culminating in recent outbursts against the Rent Bill, the *Daily Herald* must have been disappointed in Miss Rose Perriman, winner of their recent competition, who rejected the prize of a World Tour and opted instead for hard cash to buy a house, convert it into flats

and "live in one and rent the other. That way I shall have security."

#### Lenient Sentence

GRACEFUL speeches of congratulation were made by two Q.C.s in the Court of Appeal recently on Lord Goddard's twenty-five years as a judge, and evoked the reply, "Thank you very,



very much indeed." Legal authorities believe this to be his Lordship's shortest and politest address to Counsel for about a quarter of a century.

#### Stuck Again at Gander?

IT is too early to say what effect the recent formation of the International Society of Air Travellers and Air Transport Users will have, either upon its members, in whose interests it has been formed, or airport officials and airline proprietors, whose headache it may ultimately turn out to be. But both sections of opinion are agreed that Lord Brabazon, in a presidential statement, might have chosen a happier opening phrase than "This Organization is long overdue . . ."

#### The Stage Militant

WHEN we fought to have the tax on entertainment

Remitted from the theatre and the halls,

We felt no sordid hope that our campaign meant

A shilling off the circle or the stalls.

But oh, we glory in a measure which'll Deliver Henry Sherek, Val Parnell, Jack Hylton, Binkie Beaumont, Stephen Mitchell,

And Albery and Daubeny as well

From the squalor and starvation

That have been their meagre wage

Till the Budget brought salvation

To the magnates of the stage.





## The Case in Point

By GEOFFREY LINCOLN

AS an embryonic barrister you may have been lured into the business by the glamour of appearing in court, cross-examining, and teasing judges. A depressing thought may, however, strike you about life at the Bar: does a barrister have to spend a great deal of time reading dull old books? To a large extent the answer to this question is "Yes." There is a huge submerged iceberg of a barrister's life which he spends looking up law. Time can be saved on this by relying liberally on bluff, but the bluff must be cunning and well-informed, and the subject is worth careful study.

The law of England, depending largely on the decisions of judges in previous cases, is inconveniently contained in about ten thousand dusty books of Law Reports stretching back to the days when judges were called barons and everyone spoke the sort of French you now hear only on day trips to Boulogne. There is a great danger that in one of these books there lies hidden a

case just like the one you are doing, and a fine fool you'll look if your opponent can quote it and you can't. You're also expected to know the names and points of view of a good many of these cases, and to trot them out from time to time, or if you don't the judge will.

In some circumstances the situation can be dealt with, without a reading of the case concerned, along these lines:

JUDGE: Mr. Peskett, I shall expect you to deal, in your argument, with *International Herring Industries* against *Nose*. Lord Firebrace's speech.

PESKETT (*having no idea what he's talking about and playing for time*): Your Lordship has in mind, no doubt, the *International Herring Industries* case?

JUDGE: That's what I said.

PESKETT: But, as your Lordship of course remembers, that case dealt with an entirely different set of facts.

JUDGE (*slightly shaken*): Did it?

PESKETT: And was decided before *Troxie Cinemas* and the *Irish Striptease*

*Artists Union ex parte Pompadour*, of which I need hardly remind your Lordship.

JUDGE (*weakening*): No. I don't think you need.

PESKETT: In *Troxie's* case a certain doubt was cast on the reasoning of Lord Firebrace.

JUDGE: Lord Firebrace was extinguished?

PESKETT (*splitting himself with laughter*): Your Lordship coins a phrase. And *Troxie Cinemas* has been three times granted the meed of approval of the Privy Council. The three cases are rather long and deal with complex matters of Indian law, but I will have them sent for.

JUDGE (*firmly*): No, Mr. Peskett. I don't think that will be necessary.

PESKETT: Your Lordship has them well in mind?

JUDGE: As well in mind as you have, Mr. Peskett. They regard each other with the steady look of poker players who both hold hands full of twos and threes,



and finally the Judge breaks the tension by saying: Mr. Peskett. Do I gather it to be your submission that this is a case which depends entirely on fact?

PESKETT: Your Lordship has put the submission far more clearly than I could.

JUDGE: I just wanted to see what, if anything, was in your mind.

(Loud laughter in Court in which PESKETT joins hollowly.)

JUDGE: Very well, Mr. Peskett. I'm bound to agree with you. This case doesn't really come within Lord Firebrace's well-known dicta.

PESKETT: I think not, my lord.

You see? A danger neatly averted on both sides.

As you may become involved in this business of Law Reports, and as you cannot always rely on the method outlined above, it is as well to know what a Law Report looks like and to be able to find your way around the books which contain them. Law Reports are all set out in the same way, and you might look, for an example, at *Bagshott v. Bagshott* 1957, *House of Lords* 11092. This was the divorce case which first

decided that a husband who left wet towels on the bathroom floor might be guilty of cruelty to his wife. The report begins with a sort of urgent and breathless message in italics which might be a piece of transcribed matrimonial semaphore.

#### BAGSHOTT v. BAGSHOTT

*Cruelty—untidiness in matrimonial home—effect on wife's health—question of animus reviewed—no deliberate intention to injure necessary.*

Then comes the "head note," a mercifully short bit of prose which gives the gist of the case. "No deliberate intention to injure a wife's health is necessary, but where, out of laziness and ennui, a husband deliberately leaves the bathroom in such a condition that the wife has to paddle on the floor and contracts sciatica through drying herself on damp towels, such conduct may amount to cruelty."

*Quare*, does the above apply if the husband has no time to tidy the bathroom owing to pressure of business?

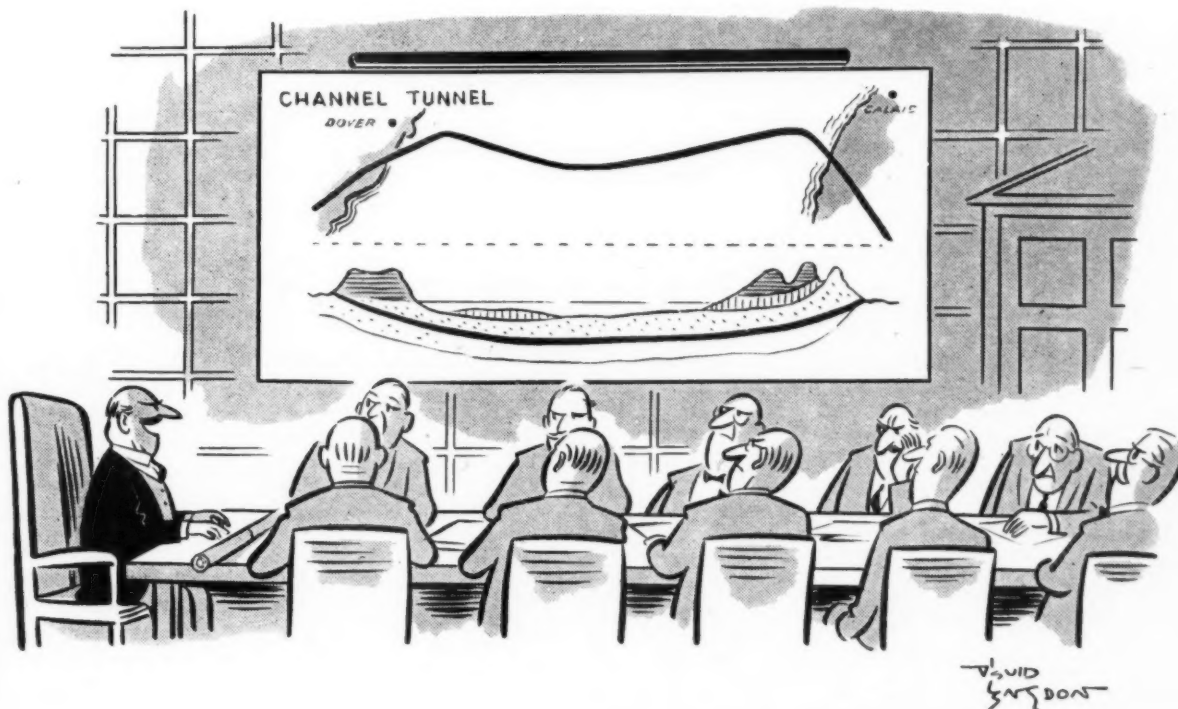
*Per Lord Tupton, contra*: "I cannot believe that the conduct here could amount to cruelty in law in the absence

of evidence of malice: if, for instance, the husband deliberately soaked the towels in the bath, or placed drawing pins in the sponge, other considerations might apply."

*Basher v. Basher* overruled, *Neap v. Neap and Snitch* considered.

Then follow five pages of the facts, ten pages of the argument of four barristers, and pages of the judgments of four English Law Lords and one brought up from Scotland for the occasion. From this it will be seen that the only essential reading is the "head note." To read any more, particularly Lord Tupton's dissenting judgment, is to court confusion and final mental breakdown. You can always say, in any future bath-towels case when you are driven to open this book, "I think I need only read the head note, my lord."

Finally, where can you find the references to the few cases you must read? There's a rather nice little red-head asleep in Appeal Court Three. Go and wake her up and ask her; she's the barrister-reporter who writes down all this law, out, you often suspect, of her wildest dreams.



"Now, gentlemen—are we still going to insist on our driving on the left?"

# Songs of Paris

By ANTHONY CARSON

ONE day I was sitting in the Dome in Paris, thinking very hard about how to get my next meal, when I saw a woman crying at the next table. She had wild red hair and the face of a bombed-out peasant. When she looked up I recognized Lulu Blanchard, the People's Singer. I had heard her once or twice in the Variety Theatre in Montparnasse, and had even been

introduced to her. Her songs were the tones of misery, about suicides, baby-farms, starvation and betrayal, and she soaked them into the pit of your stomach like a wonderful frenzied frog. She was the idol of the Paris workmen, and she was often called into the elegant salons to send shivers through the Chanel and cigars.

Lulu beckoned me over. "I know

you, yes?" "We've met," I said. "I am utterly miserable," she said, wiping her eyes. "I'm sorry," I said. "Everything is terrible. I have no friends. Look at the weather, I have been betrayed, there is no God, have you a cigarette?" I handed her a Gauloise. She lit it and suddenly smiled, as charming and untroubled as a goose girl. "And you," she said, "you look hungry, poor fellow." "I am," I said, not without hope. "What are you?" she asked, "what do you do?" "I am a writer," I said. I hadn't published a word, it didn't matter, I had a writer's diseases. Paris, cool and immortal, forgave me my three hundred rejection slips. "A writer," cried Lulu. "My God, how the world treats writers and singers." Then she suddenly slapped the table. "But you are the very man to save me." "How?" I said, scenting bifsteak and wine. "You can translate my songs into English. I am touring America." "Very well," I said. Then she burst into tears again. It was her brother, she said. He was a swine. He was trying to ruin her. She had no money. All men were swine.

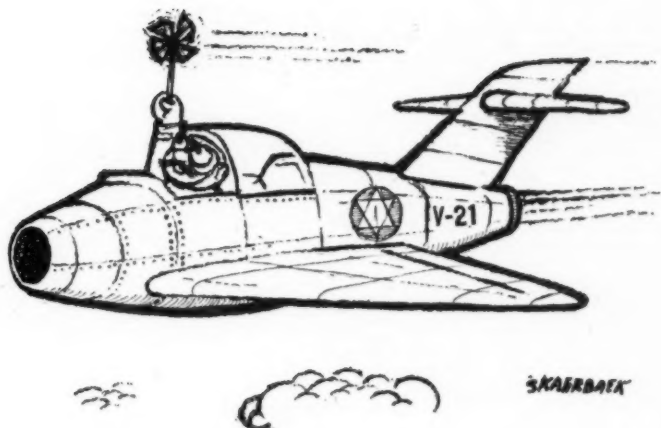
It was good to be eating again, and I got to work on the songs. As long as the food was there the work was bearable. "Oh, the sound of a hard-boiled egg cracked on a zinc counter, what it sounds like to a hungry man—" began one song. There was another song about a treadmill, and another about a funeral, and a ballad about a baby being thrown out of a tenement window. "... the tiny cot still has the stilled rattle, the air trembles with dead laughter." "We must go and rehearse," said Lulu one day. We hadn't eaten well, but she never spared herself in anything to do with her singing. "We will go to Johnny's Bar. I will get hold of my pianist." When we arrived at the bar there were quite a few people lounging around the counter, mostly English and American, intent on having a good time. We settled down at the piano and the pianist made a ghoulis preliminary flourish. "Sing yourself," said Lulu. "I want to learn the cadences. Start with the zinc counter." "Very well," I said, launching into the tragedy of the hard-boiled egg, and then



continuing with the defenestrated baby. "Very good," said Lulu. "Now sing the Treadmill." Half-way through the Treadmill a group of four or five people left the bar and came over to the piano. One of them was crying. "For God's sake," said the spokesman, a stout man with a cavalry moustache, "must you go on singing those songs? We've all come over to Paris to enjoy ourselves, and you've got one of our chaps, one of the best, being sick, and Barbara's got hysterics." "I'm sorry," I said. "Sorry to hell!" shouted Lulu. "This is Art and it's supposed to make you miserable. Look at life . . ." "But we haven't paid to listen to it," said the cavalry-man, gripping Barbara's arm and leading her away to a treble gin.

The food was getting low again, and the songs were getting me down, Christmas in a sinking liner, lost dogs in a landslide. One night Lulu and I were crossing over the Pont Neuf when she stopped me dramatically and told me she was going to jump into the river. "Why?" I said. "Because of my brother, because of God, because of the black heart of man." But I knew she wouldn't. It was just one of her songs, and she was waiting for the faint silver applause of the shrouded buildings of Paris, the jolly tears of the workmen, the agony of her friends. No actresses jump into rivers without a publicity agent. But I had had enough, and I was terribly hungry. I made for the Dome. On the way, I went into a small café and ordered a small cup of coffee. On my left I heard a thin concussive noise and saw a man breaking a hard-boiled egg on the zinc counter. I gulped down my coffee and left.

On my way back to the Dome I called in at a few cafés smelling of *aufs-fromage* and onion soup. But none of my friends was there. They were away in some other quarter of Paris eating fabulous meals and making love to beautiful actresses and selling paintings and stories and bathing in champagne at the Bal Tabarin. I collapsed at a Dome table, my head in my hands. In the distance I could hear the crunch of a hard-boiled egg. "Cheer up," cried a voice in my ear. It was a man called Chadwick. He was a gag-writer, and was always good for a meal if you could stand the funny stories. "Life's grand," he cried, "take it in both hands. Laugh and the world laughs with you." I



laughed. It was worth it. He invited me to a really good dinner in the back room of a restaurant near the Opera. Roast goose and Nuits St. Georges.

"If you only see the dark side, you get it," said Chadwick. "Smile, smile." It was true. Up or down, Paris was still the queen of adventurers. I made so

much noise laughing that a waiter tiptoed up to me and begged me to stop. "Why should he stop?" cried Chadwick. "Can't a man laugh? Can't he enjoy himself?" "It's not that, sir," said the waiter. "You see, there's a funeral party in the next room . . . somebody's baby fell out of the window."

## Guinea a Minute

HEAR the cry of a "liberal" don, from the heart of a travelling Fellow! Though the Old Guard may think I'm a Bloomsbury Pink I'm approaching the sere and the yellow. But it still takes a far-seeing fellow to determine whose side I am on. For of all Bolsheviks no one knows all the tricks like an old-fashioned "liberal" don.

Ah me! In the 'thirties with brilliant expertise  
'twixt Red and Black Syrtis I swooped like a bird.  
Now I'm old and I'm nervous from reading *Observers*.  
My final "reserve" is a spot on the Third.

Down to the Third,  
simply absurd!

Galoped with Gollancz and ditched at the Third.

Oh, it's hard on a "liberal" don (who's extremely unwilling to mellow), now the world has a mandate from Ike and the Pandit to make the poor British lion bellow. Then he feels like a cast-off Othello whose old occupation has gone. For when meddling is global and do-gooding's noble who cares for a "liberal" don?

But whatever one's view is of Munich or Suez  
what ckes out one's screw is a seat on the Panel.  
So if me you should see with a Tory M.P.  
and a comic "M.C.," won't you stay on my Channel?  
Seat on the Panel (All I could "flannel")  
Angry Old Statesman who's "framed" on the Panel.

Think who I've seen,  
think what I've been.

Think of my pension—  
and God Save the Screen!

P. E. C.

# Jessup the Pollster

By CLAUD COCKBURN

JESSUP the independent pollster—he built up this little business of his own just purely on proving that 41 per cent of people (among whom he included folks, bairns, kiddies, hubby and the missus) were more zestfully restful in Glasgow than 39 per cent of the same types in some other place of which, despite showery intervals, he made a comprehensive study—used to, and what is more to the point, still does say that if you want to get to the bottom of what people are thinking you need to skip all that slop about the

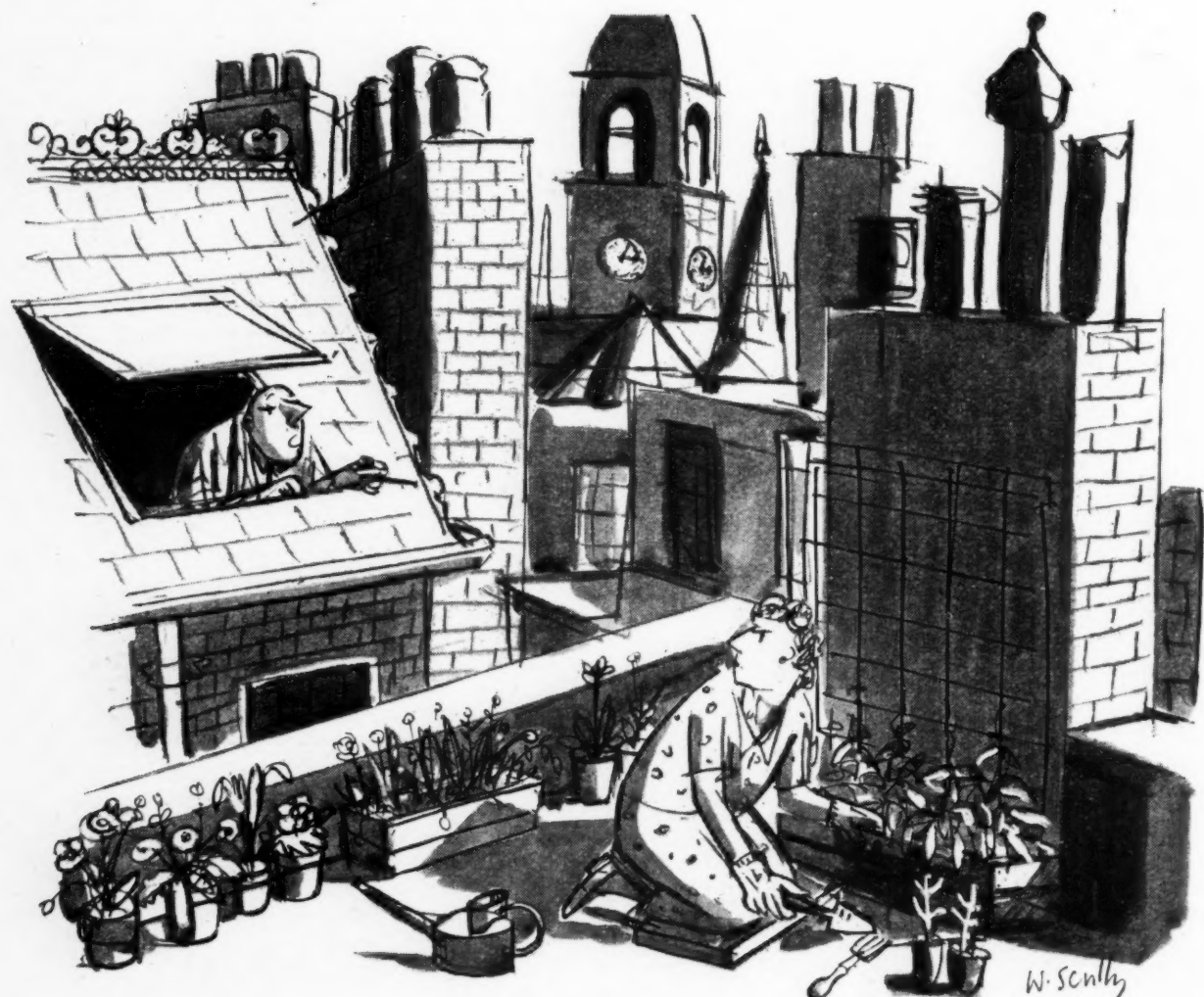
Government and why I am a Liberal notwithstanding and get to something basic like “Do funerals—ones, that is, in which things go awry—make you laugh to read about or not and, secondly, should you reply to this question that of course no such thing could bring a smile to your lips because to jest of such matters would be in the worst possible taste, why do you suppose that the only time a funeral of less than a V.I.P., with good connections early in the century, gets into the news is when the hearse upsets, or there is a row at the gate

because someone else is trying to get sod-covered or incinerated at the same time?—answer me that, you good-tasteful little chap.”

What he probably had there was quite an insight into—aperçu of, if you find the phrase more exact and comforting—a state of mind.

“Look here,” a man in Grimsby said to him, “are you suggesting that I in Grimsby, we in Grimsby, and they in Grimsby consider funerals subjects for ill-bred and ill-placed mirth?”

“I was just simply thinking,” said



*“I’m afraid Morning Glory won’t succeed there—it needs a sunny aspect.”*





Jessup, "of that time when the undertaker said . . ." he then told the story, and the Grimsby man was fain to smile.

"May I put you down as 'Don't know'?" asked the indefatigable Jessup.

Sensing that the other was on dangerous ground, the Grimsby man, whipping from his pocket a copy of a Sunday newspaper, emphasized that the living had their troubles too. "Come hell and high water," he explained, "we won't stand for this."

"Tch," exclaimed Jessup as he perused the account of doings in a town of which he knew little.

Sorting things out quietly as he went along, in a trained manner, Jessup learned that in Grimsby this late winter and very early spring things have not always, in all respects, been altogether nice in the sense that some sailors home from the sea have, if my—and Jessup's—newspaper has its facts straight, from time to time not been seeing eye to eye with various reformers who have been going about the public houses saying "Don't have another, sailor lad, it wouldn't be good for you."

Next thing, row. Next thing after that, action by reformers to get things in some way restricted. Number Three thing, action by sailors, etc., etc., to break reformers' windows, burn their pamphlets, etc., etc., etc. Publicans, alarmed, and aware that the progressive world is watching Grimsby, insist on their side of the question being heard.

Said a Grimsby publican (his name can, for obvious reasons, not be given since several of his relatives are still in Hull and low water) "The cause of all this is narks and meths. People tank up on methylated spirits, drink a glass of old-and-mild in my house, and next

thing you know it's a funeral. Or take another case—and if I read the investigations in the illustrated weekly newspapers aright this is all too prevalent up and down the whole delightful country—man comes in sober, looks around, finds to left and right members of the C.I.D. in plain clothes seeking evidence as to whence come the meths. His reaction? Hostile. Very, very bitter, Mr. Jessup. 'Liberty,' he cries. 'We're not in Russia now,' joins in another, a fact which can be proved by papers he carries, showing that his boat left Leningrad a month ago and is not due to return for several days. The result? The man who came in in the first place exceeds—his tensions have built up intolerably—and in nearly no time he becomes nearly indistinguishable from the man with the methylated load."

"It's your funeral," indiscreetly shrugged Jessup, forgetting for the moment where he was.

"Funerals," roared the publican, whose inner tensions and revolt against the Establishment now caused him to order the portrait of the Duke of Edinburgh to be taken down from behind the bar and to declare himself a republican, "that's the way it happens. Every time I look out of this window and see a funeral going by I say to myself 'There he goes—another customer.' Some people wouldn't do you the favour of staying alive another week if it was ever so. No notice given. No asking how much you ordered from the brewery traveller, you being a meticulous man, wasting not and thus hoping not to want. Oh no. Leave you flat, with a lot of the stuff on your hands. And the next thing you see of them,



there they are, parading past with black ribbons, bold as brass."

"What percentage," asked Jessup, as a fast-moving hearse roared past the windows, "of your customers would you say had, after passing away in this way, changed their opinion of the desirability of increasing our general trade with China, irrespective of the political views of the régime at present installed in Peking, Peking, Peiping?"

# America Day by Day

By P. G. WODEHOUSE

OVER here at the moment we are all very interested in the financial affairs of Joe Louis. When in the ring in his capacity of heavyweight champion of the world, Joe earned \$4,626,721, which is admittedly nice money, and the Internal Revenue authorities have suddenly woken up to the fact that he owes them about two million of the best and brightest. It appears that the lawyers and accountants to whom he had entrusted the payment of income tax let their minds wander and forgot all about it. The situation as of even date is that interest at the rate of \$73,000 a year is piling up, and the what we may call in a Pickwickian sense blood-sucking bandits are asking themselves "What will the harvest be?" So is Joe. Too late now to go to Bermuda. The only solution appears to be for him to make an income of \$1,000,000 a year, and in the way of this there are all sorts of technical difficulties. A fund is being started to raise three million dollars, in the hope that the Dracula boys, if we may so describe them, will settle for

that. Public sympathy is solidly behind Joe, who is looked on far and wide as a good egg.

Talking of eggs, there has been a spot of trouble up at Colgate University, some hidden hand having removed from its museum a dinosaur's egg reputed to be seventy million years old, give or take a month or two. One moment it was in its glass case, the next it was gone, and it was plain from the smoothness with which it was done that the job must have been the work of a professional dinosaur-egg thief. But it is difficult to see how this type of criminal can make much of a living. Colgate has one dinosaur egg and the American Museum of Natural History two, and those are all there are. And apart from this shortage there is the problem of how to dispose of the swag at a decent profit. Any fence will be pleased to co-operate with you if you bring him the Montresor pearls or the Stuyvesant emeralds and there is probably a market of a sort for stolen milk cans, but those who will do a deal on a hot dinosaur's egg are few and far between. The purloiner of the Colgate exhibit seems to have had this unpleasant truth forced on him, for he returned it next day.

George Gallup—you remember old George, the fellow who does those polls—has been looking into the matter of to-day's names for children in America. John still leads the field for boys, followed by Michael, James, Robert and William, but in the girls' department Mary has dropped from the No. 1 spot in which she was once so solidly fixed and has been nosed out by Linda, with Deborah, Susan and Karen, all upstarts of the last few years, breathing right on the back of her neck.

But worse is to come. A considerable number of female babies recently have been christened Nudine, Palestrube, Erbutus and Letha, and all over America "Where will it all end?" is the cry that is beginning to go up. The *New York Herald-Tribune* is optimistic. "Mary," it says, "has not spoken her last word. When Nudine and Palestrube begin edging their way into the first ten, that will be time enough to worry."

The cold war between man and pigeon in New York continues as grimly as ever, first one side then the other gaining some temporary advantage. City Hall has just been equipped with twenty-five thousand dollars-worth of electrified wire, and the general feeling was that that would make the birds, accustomed for years to roost on the windowsills and ledges, think a bit; but informed sources close to highly placed pigeons report that they have the situation well in hand. They are all moving to the nearby Municipal Building and the Hall of Records. If anything comes of the plan to let the National Bird Control Laboratories of Skokie, Ill., smear these with a "paste-like substance" guaranteed to prevent any bird sitting on it till 1962 I will shoot the news across the Atlantic right away.

Finally, two items come to hand which seem to fall into the category of Life's Little Ironies. The first has to do with one of New York's leading magistrates. He was invited the other day by the Police Honour Legion to speak at their annual banquet, and he did them proud. Always vigilant, always on the job—that was what he thought of the New York police, and he said it, he added, without fear of contradiction. And the impression he had formed of them as a splendid body of men constantly up on their toes and sparing no effort to earn the weekly envelope deepened when, coming away from the banqueting hall, he found that a guardian of the peace had slapped a ticket for illegal parking on his car. He came up before himself on the following Friday and imposed on himself a fine of five bucks, accompanied by some severe remarks from the bench.

The other item concerns a manufacturing firm out west. A whole year had passed without a single accident in the factory, and the men up top decided to celebrate. They gave a slap-up picnic to all their thousand workers, and it would not be overstating it to say that joy reigned supreme. On the following day nine hundred and forty-three sons of toil were absent from duty owing to food poisoning.



"What they don't seem to realize is, after the H-bomb's dropped you've still to have your Control Commission, your Ensa concert parties, your Army Kinema Corporation."



## These Fateful Years : Extracts from the Memoirs of a Socialist Elder Statesman

THERE is an invincible streak of Puritanism in the heart of all Englishmen who do not live in London, and it was soon clear that public opinion would not stand for a morganatic marriage. The suggestion was canvassed in certain circles—so I was told—that, since I was the only person in public life who had spent his childhood in royal palaces, the Crown should be offered to me. I was not myself at all keen on it. But Stanley Baldwin, the Prime Minister, spoke to me on the matter one day in that little bar off the Central Lobby which used to be known as Annie's. "No, Prime Minister," I

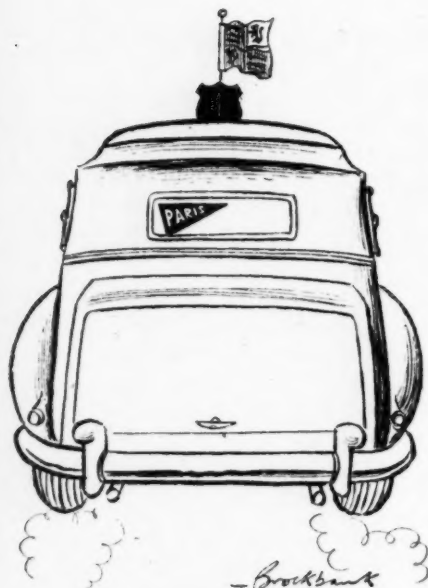
said. "I think definitely that it ought to go to some member of the Royal Family." But when he pressed me I said that of course if there was a unanimous desire throughout the whole country that I should be King, I was prepared to accept.

Stanley Baldwin came down to West Leaze for the week-end. On Sunday I took him for a twenty-five-mile walk over the chalk downs. We stopped for lunch at the railway station at Swindon. It was a beautiful rainy November day and we relaxed together on the down platform in the open air. On the way back I ran on ahead of him and rushed

up a small hillock outside Ogbourne St. George. On the top of it was a tree. "Who's the king of the castle now?" I cried. Baldwin had to follow because without me he had no idea of the way home, but I do not think that he enjoyed it. By the time that we got back to West Leaze he was puffing a good deal.

By the Monday morning I was definitely of the impression that my accession would be announced in the House of Commons that afternoon. But of course it did not turn out like that. I wrote in my diary that evening: "They have chosen the wrong man,"





but on looking back I am not prepared to say that George VI did not make as good a King as I could have made myself. To this day I am not certain what happened between that morning and that afternoon which caused Stanley Baldwin to change his mind. With whom did he lunch? I have heard one story that Hitler came over from Berchtesgaden and lunched with Baldwin. I had of course been from the first an outspoken and unwavering opponent of the Nazis, and Hitler would doubtless have spoken strongly against any offer of the Crown to me. But the papers carried no word of his being in London that day, and in fact Baldwin's diary speaks of himself as lunching alone with Mrs. Baldwin. They had haddock.

Julius Caesar, after his victories over Pompey, felt himself in a very strong position indeed. But to me the dangers were all too apparent. I foresaw that things were likely to come to a head sometime in the middle of March. Meeting him one day on his way to the Capitol I told him to beware of the Ides of March. After his assassination it was quite clear to me that it would be a mistake to make for the moment any attack on the personal character of Brutus. Several times in my speech I went out of my way to assure the

audience that Brutus was an honourable man.

I felt very strongly indeed about the German reoccupation of the Rhineland and at once got busy on the telephone and rang up Hitler at Berchtesgaden.

H.D.: I hear that you have re-occupied the Rhineland.

A.H.: So what?

H.D.: Well, I will move a resolution condemning you at the National Executive. You won't like that, will you?

There was a click and it was clear that Hitler had replaced the receiver. One man alone, however able he may be, can of course do nothing, and it must be confessed that the overwhelming majority of those in all parties—Socialists included—were at that time strongly against action. But if only everybody had been willing to ring up everybody else what a difference it might have made!

That evening I invited round to my flat a small group of the younger Members. Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney, Peter Davie, Dan'l Whiddon and Harry Hawke were, as I recollect, of the party, and as representative of the older generation I had invited Uncle Tom Cobley himself. The excuse was to meet the new Peruvian Ambassador who would explain what it was that he wanted the Socialist party to do about Ecuador. But our real purpose was of course to discuss the problem of the leadership. I did not think that Attlee was equal to the job. There had been a time when I had favoured Morrison, but he had greatly disappointed me of late. Greenwood had been a good man, but he was by then plainly past his best. Cripps was too inhuman and quite incapable of working in a team. Pethick Lawrence was too old. Bevan was too young. Who, I asked, was there? Bill Brewer would say nothing as he was afraid that some of the others would talk to the Press—as indeed I believe that they did. Jan Stewer, whom I had first met a year or two before shortly after he had won his Fellowship at All Souls, began to speak, but I cut him short. "Let us not waste time," I said, "on personalities. We speak unto the people that

they go forward, for now is the appointed time." I helped myself to the sugar. "The trumpet must be sounded for the advance," and on that note they brought in the coffee and (for those who wanted them) liqueurs.

"Hell's bells," I'd said often in these last months, when all these tragic tales reached me. Kingsley Wood, who was a Methodist, understood very well what I meant. There was indeed between us a certain roguish intimacy as between two archdeacons who understand one another. "That'll fetch 'em," I used to say, digging him in the ribs. "They won't like that, if they ever hear about it," he said, digging back and giving as good as he got. "But then they won't hear about it," I said, and we would both laugh heartily. It was hard work but it was all good fun.

When the news of the German surrender came through, the crowd went mad. The Prime Minister came out on the balcony. The crowds were milling around and singing "Rule, Britannia!" The troops were marching down Whitehall. Tears were in my eyes as I looked at them. I turned to Hugh Gaitskill and said, pointing to the troops, "I never could have done it if it had not been for them."

The long afternoon at length had passed. The dinner-gong at last had sounded. Each one, soup-spoon in hand and eyes a-gleam to the table, sat ready in his place.

*The tumult and the shouting dies.*

The men of a new age move into their place, entering into the heritage—aye, the heritage—that the old had left.

*The tumult and the shouting dies.*

*The captains and the kings depart*

*And we are left with large supplies  
Of cold blancmange and rhubarb tart.*

There is no beauty beyond that beauty.

CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS

"Thank you for your article in defence of the dental profession. ('Opinion,' Saturday). I have been nearly 40 years in practice, and financially I am not as well off as in 1921. I wonder how some of Briggs' £13-a-week men would like to extract 20 or 30 teeth for £1 17s. 6d . . ."—*Daily Express*

Depends whose they were.



*Modernise your old water butt*

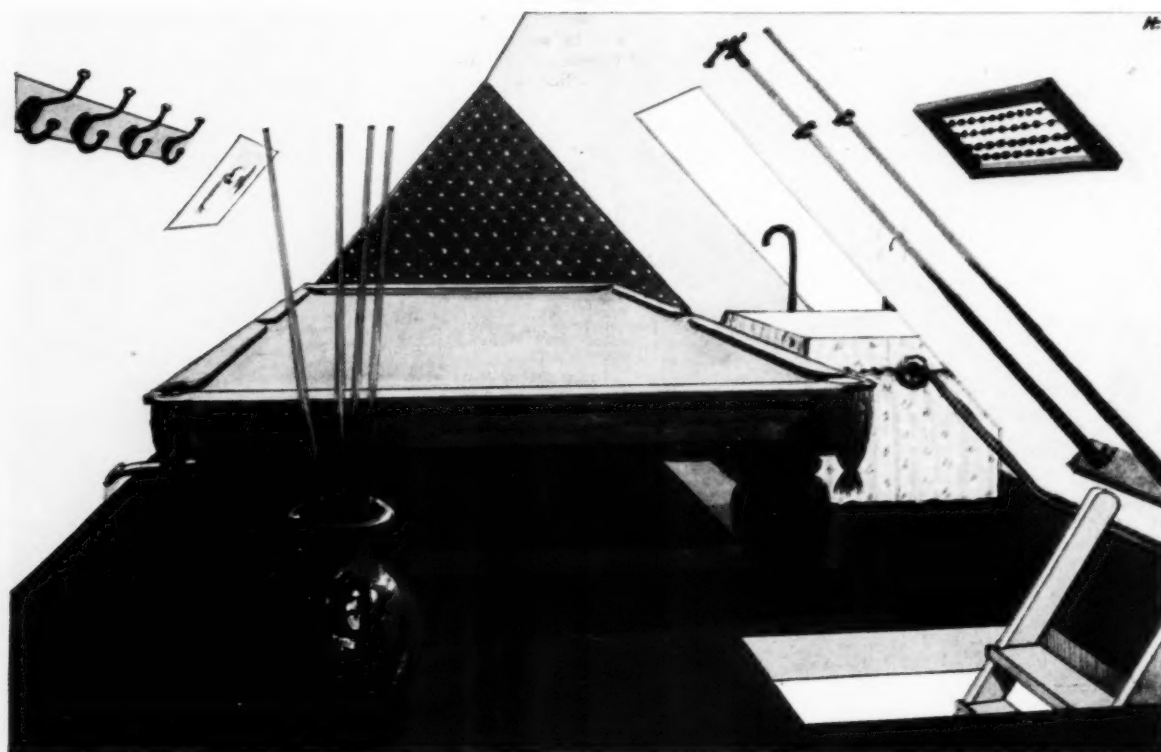
# DO-IT-YOURSELF SUPPLEMENT

SPRING  
1957





1. Before conversion.



2. The completed job (see facing page).



# Cured in Three Days

**T**HOUSANDS are joining the great Do-It-Yourself movement every week. It is estimated that in one recent week alone work was begun on over eleven thousand five hundred Simply-made Corner Cupboards.

But, like all revolutions, the new movement brings its own problems. Many men unsuited physically or temperamentally to manual skills become infected by the general enthusiasm and, once started, find it difficult to stop. Fresh tasks are undertaken before the one in

ran the electric out into the tool-shed and fused the fridge. What with my ironing-board useless on account of a piece about hinging it to the kitchen wall and balsa wood crackling under my feet at every step, I don't know whether I'm coming or going. Most likely the latter. Now he talks about Brightening the Porch with Inexpensive Beads or some such carry-on. Something ought to be done."

To meet this demand, an inexpensive "Don't-Do-It-Yourself" outfit has recently appeared on the market. "Follow the instructions carefully," the makers claim, "and you will speedily lose any desire to do anything yourself ever again." In the right hands this outfit should do a great deal of good, and help to rid the Movement of its so-called "clumsy fringe"; genuine Handymen should buy it too, for a quiet chuckle at the expense of their less deft brethren.

The approach is mainly psychological. "Read the booklet first" advise the General Instructions in a prefatory note, adding that many purchasers have been completely cured by that alone of "Do-It-Yourselfism" and have had neither wish nor need to graduate to the practical work. It may well be so. Fifty pages of closely-packed disaster, generously illustrated, should suffice to deter the half-hearted.

Particularly telling is the photograph of Mr. John Turnbull, of Trelawny Avenue, Penge, standing beside the kitchen cabinet he put together as a surprise for his wife at Christmas. The lesson is reinforced by the reproduction, alongside, of the lid of the kit box, showing how the completed cabinet *should* look. The intelligent reader will realize that, simply because he cut the slots OX, OY in the wrong end of JJ, Mr. Turnbull was obliged to use one of the sidepieces at the back, thus giving the roof its novel drainage-camber and making nonsense of the tapered retaining-pins G1, G2, G3, etc. Hence also, in part, the unconventional use of *War and Peace* to support the bottom left-hand corner of the cabinet.

Opinions will differ about the picture entitled "Handyman's Thumb" on page 17. Horror has its undoubted place as a deterrent in the modern world, but many will agree that the use of colour was uncalled-for here. Black-and-white, or black only, would have made the point clearly enough. Far more effective, in a quiet way, is the monochrome series "Fifteen Things that can Happen with Glue." One notes especially the admirably composed shot of "Mr. Josiah

Bishop (Leamington Spa) engrossed in the rigging of his Model Galleon," where the choice of a bearded victim gives a touch of the macabre to an otherwise rather hackneyed catastrophe.

Turning to the practical side of the kit the makers have wisely avoided supplying enough of any one item to enable the purchaser to construct any recognizable object whatsoever. Had it been possible to make anything out of the kit, one or two clients might by pure chance have succeeded in making it and have thus become confirmed in, instead of cured of, "Do-It-Yourselfism." Money in such cases would have had to be refunded. There is not, however, any skimping of materials.

There are forty-six sheets of diagrams, closely printed on both sides. The example reproduced here (Diagram 28b) gives an idea of their psychological impact.

The Working Instructions supplied with the outfit are short, simple, and in admirably small print:

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. If, when you have read the Booklet and studied the Diagrams, you still wish to make a start, take any piece of wood from the kit, turn it over and over in your hands, and then see whether you can identify it with any piece shown in the diagrams.
2. When you have failed to do that, hunt about instead for a long whippy bit marked ABAB. Now try to cut along the zigzag line from P to Q with a blunt fretsaw without getting the pointed end Z caught up in your pullover.
3. If the saw slipped off from Q along the dotted line marked "DO NOT CUT," that should be the end of it. If it didn't, glue the strips R1, R2, R3 round the perimeter of the Semicircular Block No. 6, taking care to ensure that they project respectively  $\frac{1}{8}$ ",  $\frac{1}{4}$ " and  $\frac{3}{8}$ " below the bottom of the block (marked "TOP" in the diagram, if you can find it). Hold the strips in place for about an hour, exerting a firm pressure with forefinger and thumb, leave for a further two hours to harden, and then flick each one lightly with a pencil to test the firmness of the joint.
4. If you still think you can do anything yourself, fix E1, E2 to Z1, Z2, and then bend OY over until its centre point is above O.
5. Lint and strapping are in the small cardboard box CB.

Our Editorial Chat next month will deal with some legal aspects of cesspools.

## CONVERTING AN OLD LOFT (See FREE colour plate on facing page)

When cutting out new dormer window to allow cistern to be moved back clear of playing area, remember to tie-in displaced rafters with six-inch threaded bolts before erecting side frames.

The abacus is secured with four gauge-8 countersunk screws, covering heads with plastic wood to make a neat finish.

Little difficulty should be experienced in getting the billiards table into the loft, provided the trap-door is wide enough.

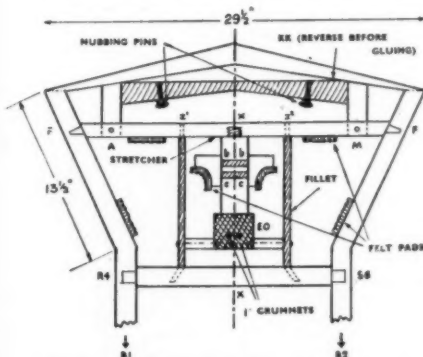


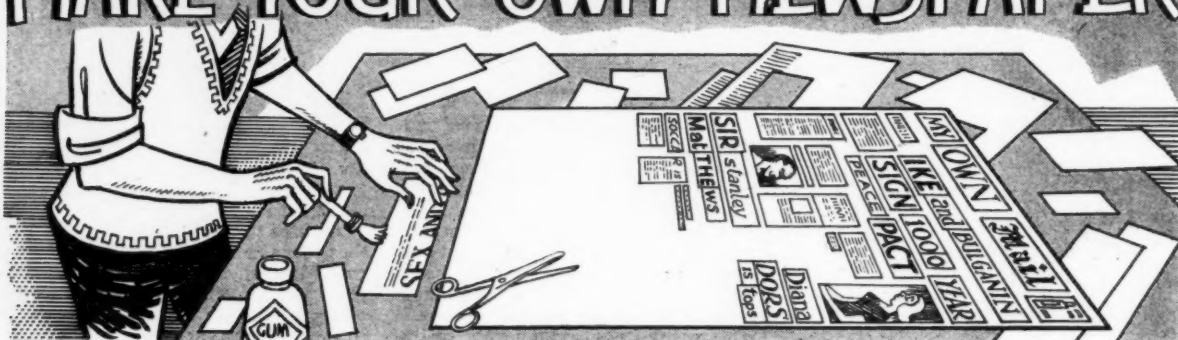
DIAGRAM 28b. Method of Constructing Frame to hold Sails of Windmill (see Diagrams 45, 46, 47 and 117) before assembly.

(The purpose of this diagram is, of course, to convey the feeling of dull despair that comes over the owner of a "Do-It-Yourself-Kit" when he realizes how much he has to do before he can even begin.)

hand is well begun. Houses in some districts are becoming cluttered with the hulls of sailing vessels, three-sided picture frames, fibreboard, shavings, partially-reversed doors, etc.—to the detriment of the good name of Home Craftmanship. Women in particular are becoming restive, as the following letter (typical of many hundreds sent to us by housewives) shows: "... so what does his lordship do but chuck the bits and pieces on the fire and set about shifting the cistern from the loft into my linen-cupboard in case of frosts. When that jammed, as I could have told him, he



# MAKE YOUR OWN NEWSPAPER



## J. B. Boothroyd has a fascinating Print Hint

WITH newsprint costs soaring and prospects of more wage claims by pools forecasters, bikini girls and other journalists the cost of newspapers may soon be prohibitive.

Why not make your own? It is a simple but interesting task requiring next to no skill, and your paper, once assembled, will last a lifetime with a few very infrequent adjustments. My own home-made newspaper, which I call the *Chez News* (a play on the name of my house) has served me faithfully for nearly two years now, requiring no attention beyond an item added to the Stop Press when events really demand it, such as a reshuffle of the "What's My Line?" panel.

There are several good Do-It-Yourself kits on the market, and choice is of course a matter of personal taste. All comprise similar basic components of news, horoscopes and TV personalities, but in differing proportions. Some have special features. The "Beaver" kit contains a box of all-purpose, ready-to-gum leaders, for example, while the popular "SundyPres" outfit includes a company lawyer and assorted unfrocked clergymen.

### Work-Bench Drawers

In making my own paper, however, I did not in fact purchase a kit at all, but rather shamelessly studied those available and then set about assembling my own components, having first cleared, set aside, and labelled a number of my work-bench drawers to receive them. I advise this course for several reasons, one being that the prefabricated kits do not always suit one's particular requirements. The news supplied is often of the "PAKISTAN DEMAND FOR KASHMIR PLEBISCITE" variety when what you actually prefer is the latest on Grace Kelly's baby. Similarly with illustrations. "Sunset over the Devil's Punch Bowl" by a staff photographer is all right in its way, but there is nothing like a half-page beach beauty astride an upturned boat to stamp your work with that professionalism which is

the goal of every true Do-It-Yourselfer. (And on the subject of illustrations, do start with a good stock of kittens; it is surprising how quickly they get used up—and just when you want to plug a quarter-page gap you find you can't lay your hands on one for love or money.)

But down to brass tacks:

I strongly recommend, for the beginner, a "picture" paper. They involve much less time at the bench, do not require special tools or strong and rigid

Even professional editors are often at a loss to fill their middle pages, and no amount of frosting, scratch-brushing or peening will remove ridges and depressions in poor covering material.

Starting with page one, then. Your aim is a nice, cheerful paper, so what about a nice cheering title? Suppose you call it the *Morning Comforter* (but of course it's up to you). The page's next claim is the picture, which is going to occupy most of it. Go through your snaps and see what you have. I really do recommend pin-up girls or animals if at all possible. Perhaps you could borrow from a friend's album.

### Gum It

Your picture selected, get a photographer chum to show you how to enlarge it up to about 10in. x 15in., then gum it carefully into position, repeatedly testing for squareness, and ensuring that room is left below it for the caption, and above it for your main news headline. The headline need have nothing to do with the illustration, and, as a matter of fact, neither need the caption.

Captioning pictures is one of the most fascinating and creative parts of journalism. I expect you have noticed, when papers all print the same picture, how they say quite different things about them. Sometimes when Royalty is snapped on a balcony one paper will say "The little Princess calls her brother's

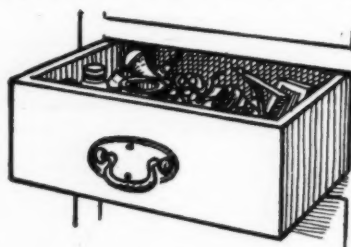


Fig. 1. Choose a drawer for odds and ends.

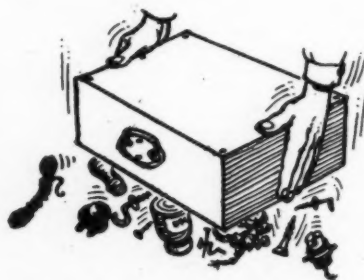


Fig. 2. Empty and brush out.

support, and are just as well thought of as the reading kind. You will, naturally, need some reading matter, but it can be fitted into those awkward corners we handymen always leave till last, and small flaws or unevennesses have a chance of passing unnoticed. Also, I should stick to four pages, just at first.

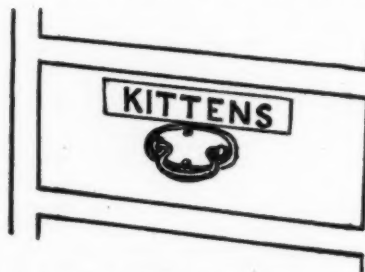


Fig. 3. Label and replace.



attention to a passing pigeon," while another will caption the identical picture, "Is He Going to Sneeze?" A friend of mine, who has been making his own newspapers for some time now, always selects from his box of captions with his eyes closed, and has obtained many very professional effects as a result. One last word about pictures, and that is, if

and this is best made up to taste from your headline "stock." This is not easy, I warn you. News itself can always be trimmed, warped, bent or folded into the desired shape, but the headline is less malleable. This is a job for scissors and paste, and of selection and rejection. For example, if you have three typical headlines available such as "INCOME OF



Enlarging an old snap.

you use animals keep them young. Old cats with sore eyes, even if posed in a Wellington boot, are never entirely successful and give your work a shoddy look. The same goes for bathing girls. Keep them in their late teens at most, even if it means enlarging them up from background specks on old beach snaps.

Now then. If your planning and measurements have been careful, your front page will need hardly any print at all. You will need a headline, naturally,

NATION NIL SAYS CHANCELLOR," "BEER TAX TREBLED" and "WORLD TO END ON TUESDAY—OFFICIAL," it only requires a little cutting and shuffling to give "END OF INCOME TAX" for your cheering main news headline. A slight disparity in type styles and sizes will result, but it is well worth it

for the required victory of gaiety over gloom. If your spacing calculations are accurate only a few words of actual news story will be needed to fill; just tap in "Income tax is to end, according to a Treasury spokesman." And there's your front page done.

On your page two you will have your horoscopes, weather and gossip. On page three your TV. Back page, horses, pools, arranging-cocktail-dresses-in-order competition and other sport.

These items are all simple, rectangular shapes, easily squared up with a policy-angle. And remember throughout that this is *your* newspaper, and you needn't have anything in it that you don't want. For you, there could be no such person as Edgar Lustgarten. You're the boss!

But also remember that more pictures than print is the maxim. And if you get a short semi-serious item like "BRIAN (2) CRAWLED IN CEMENT-MIXER" you will want cheering up again by a big adjoining snap of lambs frolicking or the first crocus or Brian's brothers and sisters playing hopscotch in a mean sunlit street. And somewhere between the pictures don't forget to cut to size and drop in some Letters to the Editor.

### Tang

Nothing in a paper gives a more genuine Fleet-Street tang. A tip is to match them to the season of the year when you go to press—cuckoos in spring, litterbugs in summer, stopped-up roof gutters in autumn and the commercialization of Christmas in winter. And remember the invaluable "Is this a record?" component. A good rummage among your tools and materials is bound to produce a "Dear Sir, I have a muffin forty years old." These are simplicity itself to fix, and lend a pleasing touch of colour that can finish off the whole job with an air.

## Wrinkles and Wheezes

By HANDY DAN

### Hang On to that Carpet Fluff

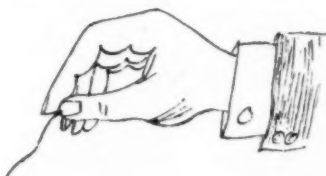
HOUSEHOLDERS tend to be shamefully wasteful about their carpet fluff. Carefully winnowed from foreign bodies, washed and dried, it can be put to a hundred useful purposes. Red fluff, for instance, when rolled into suitable lengths can be attached to twigs to make astonishingly realistic sprays of Love-Lies-Bleeding. Green fluff is perfect for miniature-garden grass, and fluff in any of the brown or black ranges is unbeatable for false beards.

And try this one. Screw two old lidless cigar-boxes to either side of your desk. Pack tightly with cleaned carpet fluff, gum squares of nylon stockinette to the box rims, insert the elbows into the resulting "nests" and thus ensure not only excellent elbow protection but greatly added desk comfort.

### A Right Way with Door Handles

There have been a great many inquiries of late about the correct way to operate an old-fashioned brass door-knob. Here is my recipe for success. First test the handle to see in which direction it must ultimately be moved and examine the rim for jagged edges and protruding screw heads which might cause laceration of the skin unless an emergency grip is adopted. To avoid any possibility of

palm-slip apply a dab of surgical spirit to the appropriate parts of the opening hand and before it completely dries seize the handle quickly with the thumb uppermost. Without relaxing your grip move the hand round to right or left until the thumb has travelled roughly forty-five degrees. Practically at the same moment pull the knob towards you, taking care that you have not left your knee in a position where it will be struck. When the door has opened to an extent that is slightly wider than your own width the handle may be released, as you are now in a position, if you desire, to pass through the opening.



Showing correct method of holding twine when securing faulty newels.

### Keep that Picture Straight

Do you have difficulty in keeping your pictures level or in deciding—particularly when you have a sloping ceiling—which

exactly is the right position? If so, all you need to do is to ascertain the correct level by means of a plumb line and then to make unobtrusive pencil marks where the two top corners of a picture should come. As if this were not enough you should next cut out hideous foam rubber corners from old cushion seating units and glue them to the wall at the pencilled points. The corners of the pictures can then be wedged into the hideous rubber holders and will be freed from any further tendency towards creeping.

### Quick Tips

1. If you suffer from repeatedly bumping your head on your own beams a simple easily removable form of protection can be provided by sewing chunks of old rubber sponge to an ordinary hair net. Neutral tints recommended for men.
2. To save wear on your stair carpet and give a new interest to going up and down stairs plan a slightly different route for every day of the week, keeping a careful record in your Stair Book.
3. Old-fashioned Hepplewhite Fire Screens with the tapestry removed and used for oven cloths can easily be converted into up-to-date sock stands, hockey-stick holders, etc.
4. With left-over material why not make a miniature replica of your lobby curtains and pelmet to conceal that unbecoming wall-accessory? Fit up with dinky draw-cord and keep closed when not in use.
5. Many readers have written in to ask about ways of preventing soap from slipping or shooting out of the hands while bathing. After testing various remedies I have found that the only infallible preventive is to wear an old pair of rubber-bristled bathing gloves back to front.
6. Hexagonal tea chests—ask your grocer to keep his eyes strained for one—can easily be converted into attractive contemporary pulpits.
7. A large-size Teddy Bear split lengthways makes an excellent extempore footwarmer.
8. For those occasions when you feel you simply "must get away from it all," why not treat yourself to a Gadget-free Corner?

D. PETTIWARD

## WORKING OUT OF DOORS?

SAVE TIME, TEMPER AND TOILET-SOAP  
BY WEARING THE SEKSATIONAL NEW

### DABS DEFLECTOR

When you are putting the finishing touches to that henhouse, outside w.c. or gazebo the irritation of flying dust, shavings, cement particles, may-bugs, etc., is inexpensively avoided with this strong, easy-to-fix deflector. No wires, glue or attachments to the ears. All you have to do is fit and face the wind. Only 10s. from all good D.I.Y. shops. (As used in the Monte Carlo rally.)



## Renchoff Unfixes Practically Everything

Among everyday tasks for which Renchoff has proved indispensable are:

Barbola work  
Shelving glued crooked  
Stamps clear of postmark  
Overcooked pancakes  
Poodle under lino

Wellington boot in grating  
Wallpapering  
Toddlers in cement  
Pinafore caught in fretwork  
Awkward nails, etc.

Renchoff even separates husband and wife.

Money back guarantee.

## IT DOESN'T STICK ... IT SEPARATES!

Hundreds of preparations are on the market for gluing things together. Almost anything that smells of pear-drops will do! But the handyman's problem, nine times out of ten, is TO PULL THINGS APART.

Is there a Doctor in the House? Yes, it's YOU!

## BE YOUR OWN APPENDECTOMIST!

No more three-figure bills — and all in guineas — once you've got the

"OPERATION AT HOME"

Surgical Set, comprising:

**MASK** (in three sizes, hatchet-faced, medium and outside).

**OVERALLS**, white, cream or buff, in stout Kwikwash nylon-type fabric.

**HALF-A-JIFF Sterilization Spray**: six different perfumes to choose from.

**ORLIVOX** anaesthetic injector, with "Gone Away" hunting-call musical attachment to play at moment of unconsciousness, 10/6 extra.

Craftsman-turned, easy-grip **SCALPELS, PROBES**, etc., precisely as used in prohibitive nursing homes and clinics in the West End.

Instructions in blunt layman's language by a practical manipulator, formerly for many years on the British Medical Register.

You'll soon learn the drill!

Stitchwork pattern-book free with every set.

A healthy convalescent (name, address and case-history on application) writes: "I was a bit nervous at first but it soon came quite natural, like shaving. Now I feel I could tackle a tonsil for anyone."



## This AFRICAN WAR-CANOE

Can be yours  
for 10/- down!



In 26 fortnightly parts, for easy assembly

Also Sectionalized Rocking Horses, Barometers, Greenhouses, Settees, Chandeliers, Verandahs, Electric Pumps, Folding Sinks, Wrought-iron Gates, Overmantels, Handy Garden Shelters, and

A THOUSAND AND ONE THINGS YOU'VE ALWAYS LONGED FOR

FILL IN THIS COUPON TODAY

Hobbies and Bijouterie Ltd., West Wycombe

Please send me your Illustrated Catalogue of African War-canoes, which I understand are fully tested and water-proofed and NOT a mere toy.

I am also interested without any obligation in Rocking Horses, Barometers, Greenhouses, Settees, Chandeliers, Verandahs, Electric Pumps, Folding Sinks, W-I Gates, Overmantels, H. G. Shelters, etc.\*

\*Cross out any that do not apply.

Name and Address

Don't Miss This Week's

## HOME TECHNOLOGIST

Wonder-Mag of Work-Bench Wizardry

Special Features this week include:

**MAKING A SIMPLE HEARING-AID.** Not even the most elementary knowledge of acoustics and electronics required. Components available at NO COST from old flashlights, radio-sets, alarm-clocks, etc.

**HOME-MADE GELIGNITE.** Easy recipe and full instructions. Every bit as successful as our recent article on "Gun-Cotton Without Tears." Nothing to go wrong.

**STARVED FOR MUSIC?** Musical instruments are almost prohibitive to buy. This article, lavishly illustrated, tells how to make an inexpensive OBOE. Earlier articles in the series include PIANO, TRIANGLE and Conductor's BATON. (Back numbers of "Home Technologist" are available.)

**HOME TECHNOLOGIST** is published by UNIVERSAL HOME CONSTRUCTION COMPANY LTD., 10 Bouverie Street, E.C.4. Catalogue free, with full details of all above items. Home Construction Kits also available for LIGHT-HOUSE, DUCKING-STOOL, FIRE-ENGINE, TOTEM POLE, WIND-MILL, ZOO (animals extra), ZINC-MINE and 1000 other household musts.



There's no need to let that  
Roof leak!

Keep  
**TRUGLU**  
and keep dry!



A preparation from a noted scientist's formula of fully bitumenized, resinous liquid-cement alloy with a super-gluo foundation that enables you to laugh at the rain.

Applied with a simple smearing motion to all gaps between tiles, faulty joints, defective damp-courses, perished zinc flats, bent gutters, worn out walls.

Dries hard and glossy in a few hours, giving your house a new sheen as well as making it weather-worthy for life. It seals all seams! As you put it on you'll find the smooth rhythm of the brush or trowel soothing and swift. Restful on the arm, zealous on the eye.

Sack that Plumber and Spread Yourself!

"It's my own invention" —

writes satisfied householder.

Have YOU ever invented a gadget?

**EEZEELERN**

Correspondence Courses

Now offer for only 6 gns.

A complete two months' course in

**HOME Invention!**

(Details of previously invented gadgets extra)

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When nails disappear into the hollow between the walls there is something amiss. **FILL-O** will not only make good the hole but fill up the gap as well.

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# Letters to the Editor



## Wallpaper Problem

SIR,—I am papering a lighthouse and having a lot of bother with taper on walls. Can you recommend a good cheerful wallpaper that broadens out as you go down the roll, to overcome same? Also, I am keen to fix up small window gardens, for sea-blight, thrift and such, but cannot cope with curved sills. My mate and I enjoy your bits about rug-making, rustic fireplaces, etcetera which come as a real breath of fresh air in our lonely vigil.—R. HORNCLIFFE (Fastnet).

(Readers' suggestions invited.—Ed.)

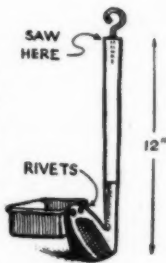
## Modernizing Your Bathroom

SIR,—Re your article (October, 1954) on use of waste heat from kitchen chimney to boost bathroom towel-rail, I fitted baffle plates as directed and teed-in two-inch pipe at side of flue, connecting up later with threaded elbow-joint taken temporarily from vent pipe on "upflow" circuit. All joints were thoroughly sealed and flaunchings trued home. No difficulty was experienced, apart from inconvenience due to having hot water system disconnected while work was in progress. However, on relighting boiler the towel-rail failed to warm up and smoke gushed from bathroom taps when these were turned on.

This is disappointing after three years and I am wondering whether any of your other readers has had a similar experience.—R. N. PHILLIPS (Broadstairs).

## Outdoor Crumb-Scoop

SIR,—Breadcrumbs often fall from a bird-table and tend to look unsightly. Your readers may be interested in a gadget I have made to overcome this difficulty.—P. D. THWALE (Clapham).



## Rat-proof Bedrooms

SIR,—No doubt it is possible (your November issue) to stop up rat-holes with boiled newsprint steeped in a solution of cement and beeswax, thereafter being painted with red lead and hammered home in the form of a plug. But many people will prefer to do the job simply and cheaply with one of the excellent proprietary stoppers such as, to take a name at random, "Pluggit." This is clean and easy to handle, no mess, expands by chemical action to take a firm grip of the sides of the hole, and is widely used by titled families and others. Furthermore it can be smoothed off flush with wall or floor (no shrinkage as with most home-made preparations) and finally painted or grained to give a contemporary finish.—O. SIMPSON (Pluggit Products, Ltd., Wembley).

## A HOME-MADE TUNNEL OF LOVE

ON the look-out for something just a little different from tennis courts and swimming pools we decided last summer to try our hands at a Home Tunnel of Love. Various pierced heart



Fig. 1

and lovers' knot designs were considered before we finally decided on that shown at Fig. 1, having regard to the size of our lawn, the labour and time involved and so on. The slight wiggle was originally dictated by the need to circumvent a stubborn bird-bath but, as is often the way, it has become one of the tunnel's major attractions.

We began by digging a twenty-foot trench, four foot deep and five foot wide. Into the completed trench we inserted some well-mixed good quality cement (which we were lucky enough to obtain in sufficient quantities from some friendly pavement-layers working nearby) and lightly coated the bottom, sides and two ends of the trench.

Our next task was to cover our trench to a height which would permit the

## Plate Warmer

SIR,—When describing a method of fixing racks to hot-water tanks last month I omitted to mention that the tank should of course be drained before drilling through the casing to receive the two angle-brackets. It is not possible to reply personally to the many letters kindly sent.—"HANDYMAN."

## Simple Hall-Robe

SIR,—It is all very well to say, as you did February, be careful to square up before gluing. I don't know where you get your wood. All I know is my left upright is warped a clear two inches out of true and the right has more of a twist in it than I got when I knocked up your Inexpensive Corkscrew (December).

Why don't you come down out of your dream-world where all the wood has parallel edges and every dowel-hole is drilled plumb vertical, and tell chaps like me that haven't got a vice (and no work-bench to fix it to if they had either) how to cut a 2" by 3/4" mortise in the narrow face of a six-foot length of two-by-one when the damn thing falls over sideways at every other chip and as often as not comes clean off the rickety wash-hand stand it's balanced on into the bargain?—"GIVING UP AND GLAD OF IT" (Hartlepool).

unrestricted passage of the average seated lover. Here again we were very fortunate in securing for only a few shillings a job-lot of jointers' tenting complete with flapped canvas end-units ideal for forming a curtained entrance or exit. Fig. 2 shows in detail the method used for adjusting our tenting so as to pass easily over the wiggle.

We decided to use company water and transferred this from the kitchen by means of a length of ordinary half-inch rubber hose such as ordinary gardeners use in ordinary gardens. To discontinue filling we simply stopped the flow of water by turning off the tap and removing the hose.

As we had no suitable craft available we found that an excellent substitute was an old handcart placed so that the wheels rested on the floor of the trench and the base of the "boat" lightly brushed the surface of the water as though floating. To give the desired effect of drifting gently with the stream a third party, suitably water-proofed, was asked to walk behind and shove.

The total outlay came out at just under seven shillings.

D. PETTIWARD

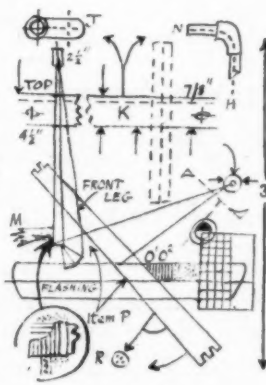


Fig. 2





## SYMPOSIUM

Enter Nature-writers and others

R. C. ROBERTSON-GLASGOW: Just time for a leisurely cup of tea before the Conference kicks off. I suppose as it's a conference of Country Writers I ought to say "bursts into blossom."

V. SACKVILLE-WEST: Sprouts.

RALPH WIGHTMAN: Draws its first subsidy.

FRANCES PITT: Here we are! Dopey, you sit there. Just a little warm arrowroot and some fir-cones for Dopey, please, somebody. Up on the chandelier with you, Tiggy-Winkle. Don't all of you envy Tiggy that scaly tail? The Scandinavian breed just end, but the West Midland tribe have another ten inches or so to write about. Whatever do you think I saw when I glanced out of the window just now?

RALPH WIGHTMAN: A combine something—stubble-cutter and beet-lifter?

R. C. ROBERTSON-GLASGOW: The old hitching-post where, in the days before Lord Nuffield, stout cobs were hitched while their riders attended to business in the bar?

R. S. R. FITTER: A phoenix regardant?

FRANCES PITT: I think you are being frivolous, Mr. Fitter, "having me on" as you might put it. "No" to all of you! I saw a flamingo carrying a vole in its talons and being attacked by a veritable flock of sparrows.

R. S. R. FITTER: How did you identify the flamingo?

LONDON TRANSPORT POSTER-PROSAIST: My lady has no doubt been to the Zoo where, garnered from burning sand and niveous ice, are pent . . .

IAN NIALL: Now is the time to plant annuals that will be wanted for flowering later in the year.

RALPH WIGHTMAN: That's not country writing, unless you are thinking of summum like export horticulture.

IAN NIALL: *The Spectator* is rather economical. I have to cover gardening too. A net should be stretched over fruit-bushes to protect the crop from sparrows and other birds. There, that links wild life and gardening.

V. SACKVILLE-WEST: I should hope so. My garden is in the country, and gardening is just as much of a country



## Nature Lovers' Corner

pursuit as growing barley. Any time, Mr. Niall, you want my notes on *aspidistra alfredonia*, do ask for them. They cover pruning, avenue-designing, topiary and mazes.

FRANCES PITT: Has anyone seen my grass-snake, Bubbles? I was just thinking it was time for his bottle and when I looked up my sleeve the old boy had gone. Would you all turn out your pockets? Newts, dormice, toads, tiddlers—no. Bubbles is just wonderful with kittens. Unless he comes back my poor Becky Sharpclaws will pine away.

R. S. R. FITTER: How did you identify the flamingo?

RALPH WIGHTMAN: Darnation be! Something nipped me.

FRANCES PITT: It was only Rikki Tikki Tavi. There! I always carry iodine, though his teeth are quite clean. He polishes them as he hones them on the sun-dial.

RALPH WIGHTMAN: Rikki Tikki Tavi was a mongoose. Whatever it is in your reticule, it's no mongoose.

FRANCES PITT: Have you ever seen a West Midland mongoose?

RALPH WIGHTMAN: Why don't you get livestock with more yield to them, angora rabbits, say? The combings alone provide a better living than steak on the hoof, at least until the Government does something about water-meadows.

FRANCES PITT: Rikki Tikki Tavi and the rest of us do quite nicely, thank you.

R. S. R. FITTER: Had the flamingo "a bill like an accentuated Roman nose"? Anything retourné would throw doubt on the identification.

PETER SCOTT: Its aerodynamics are pretty unmistakable, don't you agree, James?

JAMES FISHER: I usually go by whether I've ringed it or not. I've ringed very few flamingoes. Of course I'm summarizing the argument a bit.

PETER SCOTT: Well, Heinz, you've lived with flamingoes. Did you find their beaks aquiline?

HEINZ SIELMANN: It was too crowded in the nest to see properly, but they felt aquiline.

PETER SCOTT: And you took some pictures, didn't you?

HEINZ SIELMANN: Yes, there's a most interesting sequence showing Lord Alanbrooke setting up a hide.

L. TRANSPORT P.-P.: Where better for glutting your eyes on peers than the age-old, a-wrinkled, embowered, architectural lushness of Hatfield?

FRANCES PITT: While you have been confabbing I've seen a jackdaw making a tremendous pal of a dalmatian. And why, what is this? The other side of that bus that has just lumbered into the light, a parrot is tussling over a herring with a goat.

(Both wild and domestic bees swarm in Miss Pitt's hat.)

R. C. ROBERTSON-GLASGOW: Honey never tastes quite the same nowadays as it used to taste at Lord's.

R. G. G. PRICE

## Birdwatchers' Outing

By Charles Reid

**L**IKELY to be nippy, warned the birdwatchers. Last time they went up to the reservoirs the ducks and the divers and the waders stood moping around in circles on ice two inches thick, and double pneumonias were ten a penny.

Over my bearskin robe I put a duffel which did the Murmansk run in '42. Behind me trudged a Sherpa with a chest of accumulators into which I plugged the electric blanket. In my bosom were flasks of mulligatawny laced with vodka and lung tonic.

That Sunday was the hottest March 3 in the race memory of senior arctic

rook is their friend? Aren't they aware he gobbles up pestilential leatherjackets by the million? And green cornshoots I pinpricked. Well, yes—and why not? Wasn't a good rook, on balance, worth his keep?

Then the egg stealers. Pity the man and woman got away who recently raided an Oxfordshire gravel pit islet and robbed a little ringed plover's nest. "Escaped while I was telephoning the police, damme. Couldn't read their motor-car number." Slight grinding of teeth here.

Once enlightenment starts it goes on, however. "Consider the great crested grebe. Silky white breast plumage and frills. Used to be slaughtered for muff and cloak trimmings. Species was on point of extinction." Eyes went hard. Necks flushed a bit. "Nowadays you get thirty or forty pair breeding in and around Reading alone."

My comeback on behalf of Humanity was that birds can be as beastly as schoolboys. "You've only got to remember that bedraggled kittiwake, blown inland by a gale and mobbed to death by lapwings at Wootton."

"No, really? Where did you get that?"

"From your annual report."

"Oh."

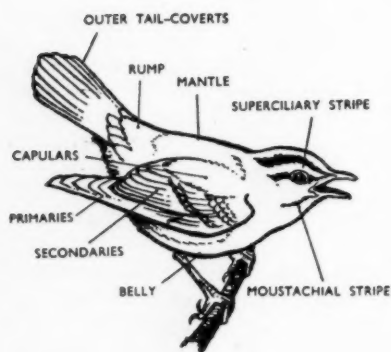
One thing about birdwatching: it gets you out to the beauty spots. On the way to the Old Reservoir we had an excellent view of the Animal By-Products Factory, a local offshoot of Smithfield. Approaching the New Reservoir we skirted a hill range of boiler-coal, knolls of rusting iron and a pumping station in brick the colour of meat you see in Camden Town on Saturday nights and nowhere else.

Ahead of me went a rucksacked, hobnailed young man with what looked like a bunch of stair rods in his hand. Only when I mentioned it was a nice afternoon for laying carpet did he explain that they were supports for a Japanese nylon birdnet, twenty feet by nine, which he always carried in his trousers pocket. All day the young man looked vainly for a hedge gap where his net could be usefully set up. In

reservoir purlieus there are no hedges with gaps; no hedges, for that matter.

There are, on the other hand, seven-foot chain fences in plenty, with rough-cast posts that rasp the skin off your chin. One of these I, like the rest, ster-torously scaled, not an easy thing when behung, as I was, with such oddments of magnifying gear, picked up at the last minute in W.D. surplus stores, as 1917 gunlaying sights, a Dogger Bank sextant kept in one piece by zinc wire, a theodolite used in building the Tay Bridge, a pair of oxy-acetylene welder's spectacles for watching wild geese fly across the sun, and a jingle of prisms from a job-lot chandelier which has long mouldered in the attic at home.

Our party spread out along the spiked railings of the Old Reservoir causeway. We twiddled at focusing screws and stared into the blue heat shimmer at rafts of mallard and tufted duck, all fast asleep, heads tucked under wings. We had one pretty girl among us and three quite handsome ones. The rest of us were instantly identifiable as birdwatchers at a hundred paces, even birdwatchers by marriage as distinct from those who started solo. We had the sort of faces you see in vegetarian cafés and at ethical church bazaars. I was seized with a



terns. Octogenarians sat up to the neck in the sea off Brighton reading water-proofed newspapers. Eggs fried on hot tin roofs. Snow buntings took the air outside their igloos, sipping mint juleps with crushed ice.

Our party had been fixed by the Oxford Ornithological Society. Cold weather gear discarded and piled in hundredweights on the roof, we motor-coached to Staines Reservoirs through blue air and festal sunshine. On the way out I moved up and down the coach aisle, pausing at this seat and that and asking: Why do you watch birds?

Nobody really knew. I wrung it out of some that birds are pretty. And that human beings aren't. If you love Bird you have rather a down on Man, it seems. I heard a deal about farmers who go blasting at nests with rook rifles. Don't these silly, cruel people know the







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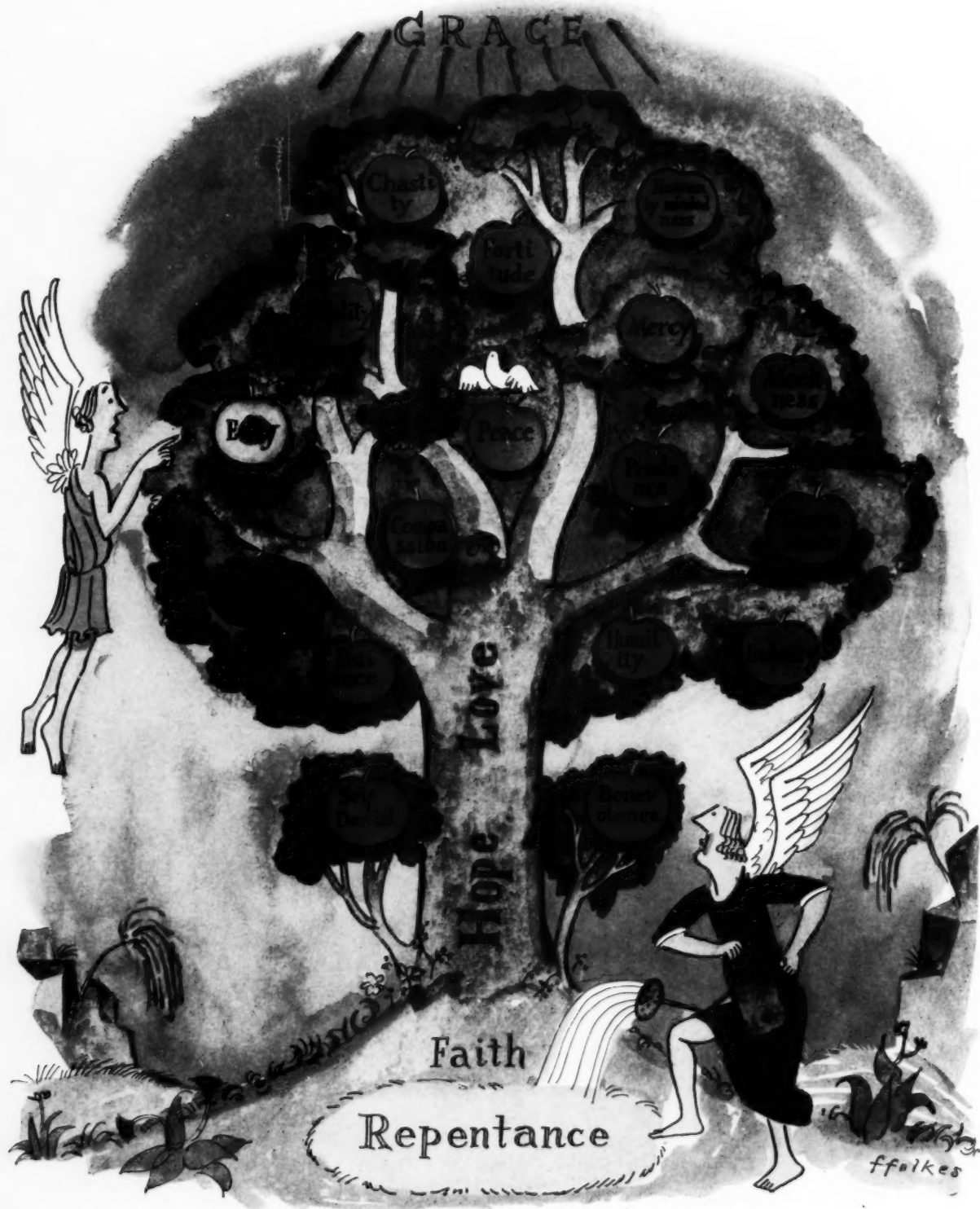
VICHES

A PART

BACK

BY

IG-STICK



"This one's gone bad."

craving to distribute high-minded leaflets; it didn't matter about what. Clearly the movement was getting me.

It is a movement that runs to leather elbow patches, socklets, suede wind-cheaters and loved, lamentable tweed jackets with crumbs of pipe tobacco in the pockets dating back to '38. For a wildly improbable ten minutes we were joined by a pin-striped youth in a painfully new trilby hat and a sweltering overcoat with white carnation lapel. He looked as though he was due for marriage at Caxton Hall but had escaped in the nick of time. His telescope was gnarled and naval looking. He instantly spotted a gadwall and a red throated diver which nobody else saw, pointed out that the reflection of Stanwell Church spire was out of true and that so was the spire itself—"It's going to fall into the water any minute." Had I, he asked, seen that very fine Buick on Port Meadow? It was usually surrounded by excited mutes. Not often one saw a Buick as far south as Oxford.

Before I could open my mouth to rebut this shameful untruth he briskly telescoped his telescope with a fourfold click and made off with a whirr of wings and a low, hoarse cry. I found later that Buick meant a Bewick swan, and mutes mute swans. That made no difference. He was an hallucination. Of that I am sure.

From the Old Reservoir causeway we moved over to a pier that sticks out into the New one. Cormorants with necks curved inquiringly perched in carved rows on houseboats. A notice board said what would happen to me if I washed myself or my dog in the water or otherwise fouled it. Somebody poked about with a stick in the wavelets and turned over a floating, dead black-backed gull with a yard of bowel trailing from it. Who had done that? A rat, said one. A shot-gun, said another, growling misanthropically.

Out on the smoke-blue water widgeon, teal, goosander, scaup, shovellers, pochard, goldeneye and a few other species snoozed meanly.

"Bit inactive to-day," complained a zoologist. "Haven't seen a *thing* dive."

With the sweat salting my forehead, I tucked head under wing and fell into a semi-doze myself. Wisps of talk drifted my way. Or did I dream them?

"Nothing like a ripe, old fashioned

sewage farm for spotting teal. Nowadays sewage farms are filthy with chemical purifiers, of course. You don't get teal squatting in lakes of chloride of lime or copper sulphate or whatever the wretched stuff is they use."

"Crows have a liking for refuse tips. There's one outside Oxford. A beauty. You see as many as fifty crows flocking there at a time. They have a *thing* about broken bikes and dissolving mattresses."

"There's a school in the Midlands with a ringing licence. They rang, I mean ringed, three swallows as great northern divers. I mean to say."

"Easy enough to mistake a shag for a cormorant. You needn't blush. In Scotland, 1941, one of our lot mistook a Catalina for a Dornier and triggered off a General Alert as far as Land's End."

"Blackbird perched on her window sill and sang like billy-ho. Its call was in A major. She imitated it on her piano in G major. The blackbird transposed down to G major as well. Fact. She's got the whole thing recorded on tape."

"Collects bird fleas. He's making a career of it. Fleas will jump on to a warm bird, not on to a cold bird. Well, wouldn't you be choosy if you were a bird flea? So he puts a hot-water bottle inside a dead rook and trails it through thickets at the end of a string. The fleas

simply *crowd* aboard. He gives them a lovely ride. That's a zoologist all over. Macabre. He took me out to dinner. At the Mitre. Sweet."

"Oh, yes, they birdwatch in Russia like anything. One starling I trapped was recovered in Ilyinsk, another in Smolensk. Better than a murmuration of Stalins, as somebody said, ha-ha."

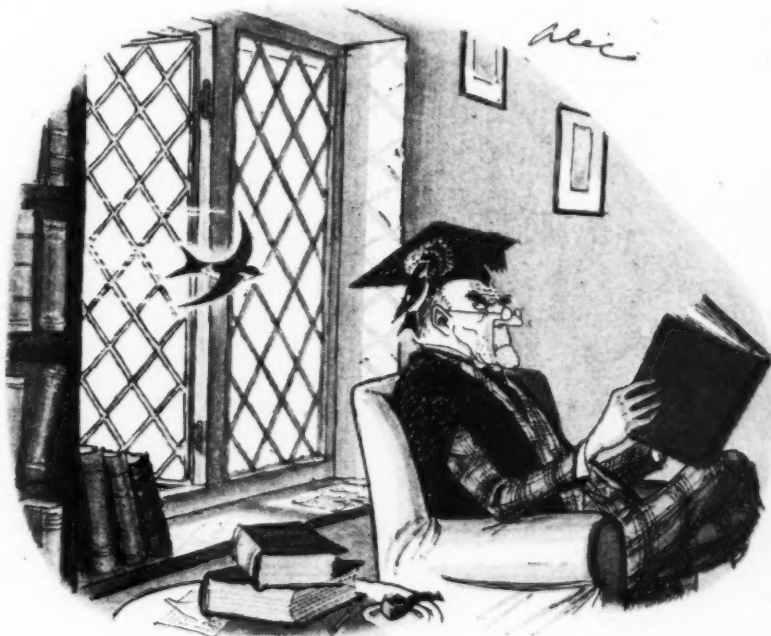
"Ten-year-old rook I ringed turned up a year later at Fécamp. Settled there to dodge the eleven-plus exam., I expect."

"Somewhere on the Scottish coast. That's all I can say. Top secret. If the location of the nest got about you wouldn't be able to get near for egg-collectors. Think of the price they'd get for an eider-duck clutch. Myself I think we ought to put down an electric ring fence and a battery of mantraps."

Peeling off from the party at Windsor, I trained home with a party of purely competitive anglers, humane fellows all, who had thrown everything they caught back into the Thames.

I reflected on the sparrows I have at various times picked off with a .177 air rifle for the good of a neighbour's strawberry beds. Long before Waterloo I was choking with Angst.

Don't think I shall speak to myself again.





## A CLASSIFICATION OF BOTANISTS

NATURALISTS spend a lot of time dissecting their feelings about other naturalists, much as pianists like to crack jokes about violinists, and physicians go into corners together about surgeons. Are botanists, then, distinguishable from butterfly-hunters, from birdwatchers and from that rare element that looks at mammals? After some years of study I think I am in a position to say yes.

First of all, botanists move more slowly than any other sort of naturalist. This is due partly to their vascula—long black tins, oval in section, which are hung cripplingly across their backs; and partly to the fact that the objects of their affection are stationary and cannot escape.

Secondly, they never look upwards, except at higher levels in the mica-schist hills of central Scotland or elsewhere where rare plants have taken refuge on rock-faces. Their ability to keep on bending down and yet survive stunning blows on the backs of their heads from their vascula is in itself diagnostic.

Thirdly, they list their finds alphabetically. This may be because their disagreements over the correct scientific classification of plants are so profound that they can only remain on speaking terms with each other by adopting an arbitrary system.

Fourthly, they have a startling convention of putting an exclamation mark after the name of each place where they

have collected a particular plant. After a few pages of: "Tooting!" "Wormwood Scrubs!" "117 Upland Drive, S.W.20!" the layman finds himself emotionally exhausted. Not so the fellow botanist, to whom the exclamation mark is just a challenge.

Finally, their sex ratio tends to a preponderance of female over male. This is an interesting survival of the old-fashioned view that flowers are a nice subject for a girl.

In other respects, e.g. their collecting itch, love of jargon and high teas, they do not differ materially from other naturalists.

They do, however, differ materially from each other. One has only to live a short time amongst botanists to realize that they are split into many sub-types so widely differentiated that it is hard to believe they all once leaned over the same benches in Botany I and tried to make dates with the prettiest demonstrator. Ranging roughly from the most amateur to the most professional these sub-types are:

1. *The Wild Flower Woman*. She just loves flowers, she doesn't mind admitting, and is apt, on seeing a friend with specimens of even moderate scarcity in his possession, to cry out "You naughty man, *where* did you get them? I've been after those for years!" Wild flower women are gregarious, especially on rambles.

2. *The Plant Hunter's* ambition is to see every British plant growing *in situ*. Since plants do not move, the hunter's task is ostensibly easier than that of a very similar sub-type of birdwatcher. But the sites of the great rarities are often difficult to find and the plant hunter's hardest work is to persuade some other hunter to give away his spot for, shall we say, *Spiranthes romanzoffiana*. This is usually done on a barter system, one monkey orchis being worth two romanzoffianas, etc.

3. *The Literary Botanist* is often a refined plant hunter and may have affinities with the Arctic-alpinist (see below). He also rather likes it to be known that he really has the biological side at his finger-ends and is a dab at field identification, though it is curiously hard to get him to demonstrate his skill. Much of his time is spent in his club, talking about his big day on Ben Lawers and writing little pieces about the great botanists of the past for the better weeklies.

A rather distinct sub-sub-type is the *Poet Botanist* who is usually female and pretty sincere.

4. *The Arctic-Alpinist* is probably not a professional but a hard-bitten amateur with a trip or two to Lapland behind him. Since the attentions of sheep and of some of his less reputable colleagues have driven many of our more exciting plants higher and higher



up the rocks, he tends to be as good a climber as botanist. Though becomingly modest in his conversation, he knows, and we know, that his type is the élite of the botanical world.

5. *The Mycologist* may be amateur or professional. His distinguishing activity is the Fungus Foray, after which almost no stone and certainly no rotten tree-stump is left unturned in acres of wet woodland. A rather new sub-sub-type here is the expert on edible fungi, who may shade by way of truffles and a French pilgrimage into the literary botanist (see above).

6. *The Ecologist* is probably a professional who works for the Nature Conservancy. He or she is above all a counter, measuring out the bleaker sorts of moorland into devotional little squares and poring over them in small groups and biting winds, literally combing the peat and counting, counting, counting. For the ecologist things end not in *omega* but in *eta*; those primroses by the river's brim are so many individuals in a series of riparian *frimuleta*.

7. With *The Systematist* we enter the world of professional botany unalloyed. For him no joyful outings, but the echoing passages of a vast herbarium, the serried drawers of microscopic slides, the love of a single group, love shown by passionate fission into more and more species, until where one hawkweed flourished there are ten, where one bramble a hundred wave their tendrils, each with a new Græco-Latin appellation bestowed by him and carrying his

name behind it into immortality. The systematist keeps the plant hunter going by providing him with more species whenever he looks like coming to the end of his list.

8. *The Geneticist* is the new High Priest of botany, though he looks like a mathematician from behind. Experiments are his sacraments, and occasionally he preaches a sermon about them in the Third Programme. He is not seen in the field.

9. If *The Plant Physiologist* lives, for example, in a world of the functions of root-hairs he may not have noticed the flowering parts for years and, confronted with the whole plant on one of his rare appearances on the surface, has been known to ask what all that pretty pink stuff on top was.

10. *The Forest Botanist* brings us back to the open air again. Through long association with foresters he has adopted their rough manners for protection, wears tweeds and a moustache, drinks beer and knows some words of Hindustani which he believes to be oaths. He is also exceptional in not carrying a vasculum, presumably because few trees would fit into one; instead he brandishes a terrifying instrument with which he bores into their trunks on moderate provocation.

11. Lastly we come to *The Agricultural Botanist*. Since his job nowadays is principally to devise ways of eliminating plants with selective weed-killers, he is included here only in the interests of completeness. **BRUCE CAMPBELL**

## Human Interest

"Nature and natural history are never mentioned as the book is entirely about people."—Review in *The Countryman*

HOW strange is the strength of tradition

That writers should write about men  
When the mite and the dormouse  
Provide so enormous

A chance for the capable pen:  
How dull to read merely of people  
(A husband, perhaps, and his wife)  
When the average shellfish  
Is far more unselfish  
And leads such a passionate life!

The names that writers choose  
For titles are no proof  
Of contents: think of shrikes and shrews  
And cats on hot tin roof.  
The seagull and the bear,  
The wild duck—all are in  
This category: and beware  
Of dogs beneath the skin.

The fact that an author may dwell on  
A girl, not a gasteropod,  
And write about humans  
Instead of ichneumons  
And newts seems exceedingly odd  
To naturalists. In a bookshop  
I'll always replace on the shelf  
Such works: what I keep'll  
Be all about people—

But then I'm a person myself.  
**ANTHONY BRODE**



# ESSENCE OF



THERE were the usual adornments on Budget Day. Sir Winston Churchill and Mr. Gaitskell faced each other, each decorated by a flower, that of Mr. Gaitskell, it seemed, in honour of his birthday, that of Sir Winston presumably in honour of himself. There were three top-hats—one of them (need it be said?) on the head of Mr. Nabarro. (It was ceremonially raised in tribute to the reduction of purchase tax on Kidderminster carpets.) There was a public inquiry—on the banking system—under the chairmanship (need it be said?) of Lord Radcliffe. By what oversight was it that the M.C.C. did not invite Lord Radcliffe to decide how many fielders one should have on the leg side?

Whatever either party does it is obviously more probable than not that by the mere swing of the pendulum the Socialists will get back at the next election. The Lady rarely turns up three times running. If she does it will

be because of some special act of God or folly of the Socialists, and if one believes in the party system then one must believe that it is healthy that the parties should take it turn and turn about to be in power. The pretence that there is an absolute choice at elections between beatitude and damnation is a pretence for the hustings and not for reality. That being so, no one can tell what effect, if any, a Budget now will have on an election in two years' time, and therefore a Chancellor, if only for lack of anything else that it is profitable to talk, might just as well talk sense.

That is what to his great credit the Chancellor on the whole did. Of all accusations the accusation that he made concessions to surtax-payers for political reasons is the silliest. The Chancellor does not require the expert arithmeticians of the Treasury to tell him that there are more voters with incomes below £2,000 a year than above it.

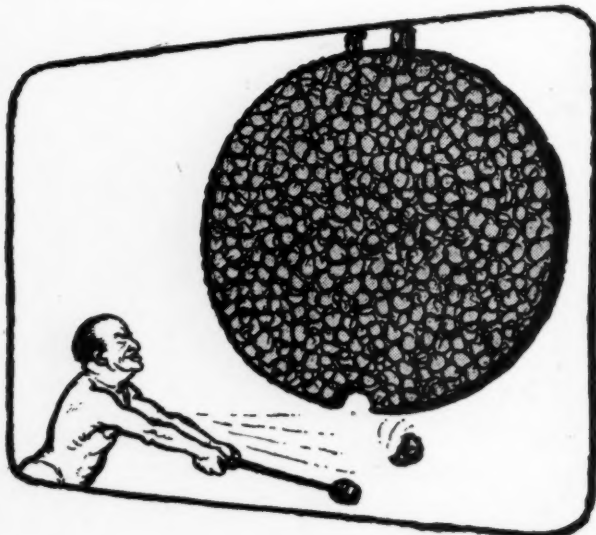
Mr. Gordon Walker, to do him justice, put the point more intelligently when he spoke of an appeal not to the voter but to the core of the party. We could have done with a joke or two, for Mr. Thorneycroft makes good jokes, but beyond that there was little room for complaint about the manner. Owing to Suez and this and that there is not much room

for manœuvre, and he was right not to try to make the Budget exciting. The broad mass of people of all classes are to-day consuming as much as there is any sense in consuming. The trouble is that they are consuming more than they are producing. Therefore Mr. Thorneycroft was right to eschew alike the language of Mr. Butler about doubling standards of living and that of Mr. Griffiths about helping all the people. Any measure which increased everybody's purchasing power would to-day be by definition self-defeating.

How good the proposals about the entertainment tax are! What a comfort it is for the country to be ruled by a civilized man! Television and the cinema can only be tolerable if there are decent actors, and there can only be decent actors if there is a live theatre. Therefore it was thoroughly reasonable, if entertainment tax there must be, to put it on television, to keep it on cinemas but to take it off the live theatre. This is not perhaps the most important thing that has been done since the war, but it is just about the most sensible.

More generally what matters to-day is to increase production, and the fact of the matter, whether we like it or not, is that while for production both brawn and brains are important, brains are more important than brawn. It was courageous frankly to state that it was in the general interest that those on whose enterprise increased production depends should be freed a little bit from anxiety.

Mr. Harold Wilson naturally did not admit all this. Mr. Wilson is nothing if not knockabout, and he shoots out his witticisms in the middle of London-School-of-Economics stuff like a don on television just after the television has been turned off. His argument was mostly designed to show that the whole







economy had been knocked haywire by the Suez folly—a matter on which I do not imagine that many inhabitants of the Government Front Bench would much disagree with him if only they were free to say so. But the cracks were therefore mainly at the expense of Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Butler, and of the two Mr. Butler seemed to enjoy them the more. He rolled about and looked roguishly—to borrow a Daltonism—along the bench at his colleagues. Mr. Macmillan, like Queen Victoria, was not amused—or at least, like some lesser German royalty, was less amused. The shafts only incidentally glanced on to Mr. Thorneycroft in so far as loyalty prevented him from dwelling on the shortcomings of his predecessors. But the jokes—those about Mr. Gladstone's portrait now to be turned with its face to the wall, those about Mr. Macmillan achieving the feat of quarrelling with the T.U.C. and Lord Salisbury at the same time—were excellent jokes. How Dr. Bronowski would have objected if he had been chairman of a Brains Trust! Mr. Wilson's serious arguments were that the Government had an "assignment with inflation"—that is to say, had abandoned any serious intention of stopping inflation—and that the concessions to the surtax-payers would

benefit only the surtax-payers. As for the second argument, there is an honest question whether you get the greater production in an egalitarian or in a graded society, but it is not a question that can be begged. If there is increased production it will be to the benefit of all classes. As for the "assignment" with inflation, there too we must wait and see. But the "plateau," on Mr. Thorneycroft's own admission, had already become "a

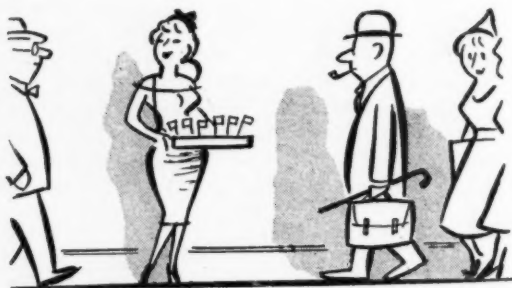
gentle slope," and on the other hand Sir David Eccles was plainly right in saying that Mr. Wilson's proposals would lead to "a rip-roaring inflation" far more certainly than those of the Chancellor. The awful fear is that Mr. Wilson is right about the Chancellor and Sir David Eccles is right about Mr. Wilson and Mr. Roy Jenkins is right about Sir David Eccles, and that none of them is really going to stop inflation. Mr. Roy Jenkins wound himself round the dispatch box like a gainly lamp-post and asked whether the Budget really would encourage investment and whether it really would check inflation.

On Thursday the debate drifted on for a couple of hours. Then shortly before six in a denuded House Mr. Jack Jones was called. A pernickety Chairman might perhaps have asked whether some of his remarks were strictly pertinent to a Budget debate. It was fortunate that no such Chairman was presiding. For those few Members who were in their places soon found themselves listening to an intensely sincere, patriotic, moving and courageous denunciation of a Communist attempt to sabotage British industry. Suddenly we woke up to the fact that here was a man who was not playing the cards of a game but who was talking about reality—about what had happened and what might happen. It was a strange experience. Mr. Jones himself was not far from tears and some listeners were in no very different case.

CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS



Mr. Harold Wilson





## City

### Booster Budget

MR. THORNEYCROFT'S first venture in national housekeeping has been treated with extraordinary caution by the Press. *The Financial Times* points out that he has budgeted for an ordinary surplus of £462 million—"larger than any actual or estimated surplus since Sir Stafford Cripps left the Treasury." Struggling with Dr. Adams for front-page supremacy the Chancellor's handiwork becomes "Pete's Pep Pills" in the *Daily Sketch*, and "A little bit off the top" in the *Daily Mail*.

The oracle of Coleman Street says that this Budget "may lean too far towards disinflation," the old "ha'penny liar" says "Something for everybody, but not much for anybody," and the *Daily Telegraph* sums up for the tactically disgruntled but otherwise delighted right wing with "So far from having yielded to the siren voices which have been urging him to be lavish in tax reliefs for political purposes, he has erred if anything on the side of caution."

On the left too there is caution. This is a "rich man's Budget," a "To him that hath . . . Budget," but while obviously disgusted by the concessions to surtax-payers the pundits of Long Acre, Rolls Buildings and the Farringdon Road convert most of their wrath into tactical disgruntlement and manage, therefore, to remain on speaking terms with the floating vote.

For a change I find myself in most complete agreement with the *Daily Express*, or, more particularly, with that section of Beaverbrook's barnstormers which is responsible for the "Opinion" column. The *Express* does not find Mr. Thorneycroft timid or cautionary: on the contrary "he has made tough, bold deductions" which are "open to facile misrepresentation" and "contain the seeds of hope, recovery and betterment. They open doors . . ." "This is a Budget keyed to opportunity and baited with incentive."

Of course it is. How can total personal tax cuts of up to ten per cent—a pay "increase" of £4, £5 or £6 a week for many thousands of executive and professional workers—be regarded as "not much for anybody"? It is thirty

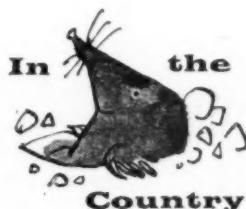
years since the surtax-payer's case was given sympathetic consideration at No. 11 Downing Street, and in making these substantial concessions Mr. Thorneycroft has made himself a pioneer in very difficult territory. With this single thrust he has prepared the way for long overdue reforms in the basic structure of revenue.

My chief criticism of the Budget is that it leaves the country divided quite artificially into nominal "haves" and "have-nots." Very little has been done to ease the lot of the large income-group, £800-£2,000, which is probably more hard-pressed than any other group by inflation and the legitimate ambition of keeping up with the Joneses. We need a single graduated tax on income, a tax that gives highly skilled operatives,

bureaucrats, industrialists and professional men a maximum residuum of purchasing power when they need it most. This case for real capital investment is quite simple—that to ensure for Britain an adequate supply of leaders, creative thinkers and craftsmen we need to nourish the younger generation with opportunities for higher education, travel and homes fit for minds to develop in.

The cuts in purchase tax on kitchenware, tableware, furniture and floorware should be of immense help to industries and localities that were beginning to feel the pinch. North Staffordshire, Stourbridge, Lancaster, Sheffield and Wycombe will certainly become more attractive homes for investors' savings.

MAMMON



### Piggery-Pokery

THIS is the warmest April since 1328. Last Sunday was the driest day in Devonshire since 1857. It didn't rain at all in Bradworthy. Records are a great bore, even if they're true. We shall soon be entering the Record Season. Then the Press produces one every day, such as somebody has run faster, jumped higher, or sunk deeper than anybody else. I hate to add to such tedious data, but the fact is, this is the first year since 1643 that England has been entirely self-sufficient in eggs. We haven't imported a single omelet. This unfortunate spurt by the poultry industry is now costing the Government millions of pounds a week, as it has to foot the difference between the producer's price and the cost you pay for a dozen eggs in the shop.

This could be called the Egg Gap. It may soon be costing the Exchequer more than the Navy. But it seems that a similar glut is unlikely to occur in bacon or pork, because the price is falling every week.

The collapse of the porker market is producing many difficulties among farmers, many of whom built new Dutch piggeries during the last few years. They now find that their pig-man has to fatten 200 baconers a year in order to pay his own wages. The profit on the baconer is only £4, even if you exclude

the cost of labour altogether, and feed the wretched hogs yourself.

This is precisely what millions do, and the question we ask ourselves is, is such work worth while? One of my neighbours showed me his annual accounts. His pig-keeping made a deficit of £300—but against that figure he informed me that he had an invisible asset which his accountant had disregarded. It was that the farmer considered he had saved himself £100 in doctor's bills by taking the exercise of feeding the pigs.

I asked him how he knew he would have been ill if he hadn't done this work. He was evasive on that point. It's too bad that the profit from pig-farming has to be resolved in terms of exercise. It's a pity the Unions don't take this item into account. It must be very bracing being a ship-builder.

At the moment I can't decide whether I am avoiding coronary thrombosis or senile decay. I shall choose the more expensive illness because I'm determined to keep my pigs somehow—if it were not for the stimulus of their company I wouldn't be able to tolerate my friends at any price.

RONALD DUNCAN

"Messrs. W. G. Pye Ltd. are reported to have developed a TV camera which is small enough to be dragged through sewage, drainage or other pipes with a minimum diameter of 6/8 ins. The resulting image, showing the interior condition of the pipes, is shown on a TV screen."

Dixon's Paper circular

B.B.C. or I.T.A.?





## BOOKING OFFICE

### The Green and the Sere

*Far from the Madding Crowd. Tess of the D'Urbervilles.* Thomas Hardy. (St. Martin's Library.) Macmillan, 4/- each.

WHAT an honest writer Hardy was. Obviously he often wanted to maunder on about the charms of the past, like the curator of a museum of "bygones" kept in the disused torture-chamber of a castle, and nobody has expressed more hauntingly the music of the Old England that lives in prints and songs; but he always remembered in time that the past is what the present has escaped from. The merry May mornings and harvest suppers and traditional rituals were interludes. The countryside was a place of grim deaths for man and bird, of warping toil and evicted peasantry and a coldhearted union between a pharisaical public opinion and the chilly law. He was a subversive writer, without being exhilaratingly subversive like Dickens or Orwell; Old England was a siren to his head but it was Orpheus to his heart.

Hardy was a scholarly novelist; he passionately wanted to get things right. This gave his descriptive writing its wonderful precision. His set pieces about landscape and weather were never detached purple passages. He was always aware of the geological foundations on which his characters lived. He covered the stone skeleton with vegetation, which he exposed to accurately varying climate and interrupted with expertly described buildings. He described the inhabitants of the countryside in appearance, in psychology, in class, in function and in relation to social and theological theories. His speculative passages had something of the Hyde Park agnostic's notebook of dangerous thoughts from near-contemporary thinkers. Perhaps it is a pity that his survey of Wessex did not stop one stage short of completeness.

He was a link between George Eliot and Lawrence, both his intellectual superiors; but he tried to keep up-to-date by reading Thinkers rather than Novelists. He remained very close to

the commercial novelists with whom he competed, not least in his power of telling a story. In Hardy we are never far away from the tale of Betrayal with the stains of kitchen tea-cups on its pages; but after all he was born nearer to the time of Defoe than to to-day.

The plot of *Far from the Madding Crowd* is well managed, as far as the interlocking of incident goes. The weakness is that the heroine's attractions, the motive power of the plot, are

the impression of almost uncontrolled outpouring. If their part in the novel is simply light relief, they unbalance it. If they are supposed to complete the picture by recording the talk of labourers after work is done, they are incredible, far more incredible than O'Casey's talk from the Dublin slums. The astonishing phrases tumble out and the hackneyed comparison with Shakespeare holds its ground.

*Tess*, written much later, is about all sorts of things, from the effects of separating ethics and love to the ruin of the copyholding class. It is full of quotations and at times seems to be an attempt at a highbrow novel. It lacks the swift, strong story-line of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, the humour and the descriptive richness. The stuff about the D'Urberville pedigree is unconvincing and there is an intermittent silliness about some episodes that shows a decline in grasp of life; Hugo handled such flourishes better. On the other hand, *Tess* herself is a far more complex and moving character than Bathsheba and, if Alec might be a minor villain in early Dickens, Angel Clare is an enormous advance on Sergeant Troy. Compassion is never extorted from the reader by mawkishness. *Tess's* sorrows are not piled on a weakling. She is generally seen successfully pitting herself against a task or a journey. Above all, the novel has a dignified sensuality quite unlike anything else in Victorian fiction. Gabriel Oak's sheep are there as tenants of a landscape or as providing an opportunity for tenderness or skill or disaster. The cows in *Tess* exude warm, lusty life, as the milk flows under the fingers of the lovers.

To-day the famous phrase about the President of the Immortals seems stuck in and not quite serious. *Tess* is not really the victim of any chain of malign coincidence. Only in the mischance of pushing the letter of confession under the carpet is there any evidence of hounding by fate. *Tess* is the victim of one man's character and, Hardy stresses, that character is formed by the conjunction of two tendencies in English belief, Pauline harshness and agnostic



insufficiently realized. Her three lovers, because they are very different men, react to her differently; but the interest is in them, not in her. Bathsheba is a "tease" with a head for business, a Wessex Scarlett O'Hara. When Hardy developed in knowledge of women he lost some of his power in visualizing their environment, or perhaps he saw it more like a social observer and less like a painter. Bathsheba is still only a figure in a landscape which is described with sustained brilliance of observation and phrasing.

Hardy shows the rigours of the past alleviated by visual beauty and verbal humour. When he tries the humour of character in Joseph Poorgrass, he fails. The packed scenes in the malthouse give

pride. At the end, Tess lies frozen deep by the black ice of Old England's winter, as Bathsheba and Gabriel are warmed by the shallow suns of its spring.

R. G. G. PRICE

**The Inheritors.** Richard Church. *Heinemann*, 10/6

As man and poet Richard Church has experienced "... youth's cheat and middle life's illusion"; known "the long and sad pursuit of love" in "the lifelong pursuit of understanding," and now has come to "... the grizzled years, demanding nothing and expecting nothing."

Quietly he tells us:

*"A kingcup or two is all that I've seen  
In this cold spring world, with its easterly  
hiss.  
No doubt if I searched in the mud, I should  
find  
A companion, maybe an odd celandine  
With half-frozen petals streaked yellow  
and green.  
But still, I'm content with one blossom,  
for this  
Is a promise enough, just caught in the  
ditch.  
To warm my old heart, and make the  
month rich ..."*

The dull-seeming stuff of observation, shaped, held in tongs on the anvil of experience—and down swings the hammer of poetry and sends a bursting white-hot star of imagery soaring up in the clinching line:

*"Though an icicle hangs in the roof of my  
mind."*

Most of the poems are short; but of the longer ones "In Aquitaine," a magnificently evocative piece, shows as much power as the best of the lyrics.

R. C. S.

**A Mirror of Witchcraft.** Christina Hole. *Chatto and Windus*, 21/-

This pretty anthology, made up of extracts from contemporary reports on various cases of witchcraft, gives an uncommonly sharp idea of what such cases meant in their day. Belief in witchcraft seems to have been a bit like belief in flying saucers; the faith was widespread but the proof exceptional. Who would imagine that, for all the excitement, the average annual number of witches executed in England between 1542 and 1735 was a mere half-dozen? Nevertheless, the determination to believe was, and no doubt still is, strong; it was even alleged against the Manningtree witches that names like Elemanzer and Pyewacket, by which they were said to call their "familiar," were such that "no mortal could invent." How about Chubblewig and Sneezelewig? But perhaps Dickens (sinister name), who invented and rejected those two in his search for Chuzzlewit, was not wholly mortal.

B. A. Y.

**Room at the Top.** John Braine. *Eyre and Spottiswoode*, 15/-

Joe Lampton looks back more in sorrow than in anger on his post-war

salad days in a flourishing North-country town. He means to take all he can from life, including the best of the women, a house on t'Top and a Sulka dressing-gown. If there are to be two nations in this country he knows which he is going to belong to.

And yet Joe remains a likeable chap, because he has the grace to be ashamed of himself. He is alive and young and of our own time, and he rings true. His love affairs are full-blooded. He has a genuine passion for a married woman, older than himself, worldly wise and understanding. But her beauty is beginning to fade and the liaison spells failure. Marriage with the pretty daughter of a rich manufacturer will bring success. "Nobody blames you," says a friend. "That's the trouble," says Joe. There is a moving warmth in this well-written story as well as shrewd contemporary criticism. Not since Walter Greenwood's *Love on the Dole* has a first novel so brilliantly illuminated the northern scene.

R. G.

**A Tale of Three Places.** Edgar Mittelholzer. *Secker and Warburg*, 18/-

The three places of the title are Port of Spain, London and the Caribbean island of Saint Lucia: the protagonist Alfie Desseau, a young French-Creole Civil Servant, "introspective and serious ... not a true Trinidadian," with an irresistible fascination for women and by no means unresponsive to them. Constance (maiden name Soan-Gibson: "an Everest among women"), British wife of Alfie's half-Chinese old school chum (a city councillor at twenty-eight), becomes his mistress, encouraged by her politically corrupt and go-getting husband; Elsa, of wealthy Spanish ancestry, fails to move him; in England he identifies Lavinia, a Bohemian sculptress and artist's model, with the Rhinemaiden of his favourite opera, but is repelled by her erotic preferences; and finally settles for honey-blond Martina, also married and a Barbadian, whom he compares to Brünnhilde.

Colourful, written with enormous gusto but overcrowded with characters, sometimes naïve when extreme sophistication is intended, the novel's main interest lies in the impression conveyed of the West Indian way of life rather than the hero's intellectual, emotional and sexual problems.

J. M-R.

**The Red Marten.** Peter Nisser. *Michael Joseph*, 15/-

A Swedish *Cold Comfort Farm* three or four hundred years ago, but with inhabitants even more brutish, life never graced by humour, is the setting of this story, and war, with horrors of sights, sounds and smells, continually tears away—often for ever—the small hopes of these poor Värmland peasants. Readers who will risk the boggling of imagination may learn what war was in those days and what the yellow-coated Swedish



Holmeswood.

soldiers endured. This book presents sharply etched pictures, a village mob out to destroy a witch, the awful helplessness of a young girl alone, the savagery of lust, the orgies of a wedding, the rites of childbirth and death, the hideous tools of those who cast spells.

Peter Nisser seems not yet to have grasped the value of light and shade; in another idiom he is almost all *fortissimo*. Yet, when he does allow himself a short *pianissimo* passage—generally in describing the cold northern scene, seldom in dealing with human relationships—his gifts as a writer shine clearly and promise much.

B. E. S.

**Death of a Huntsman.** H. E. Bates. *Michael Joseph*, 12/6

These "four short novels"—long short stories would be more accurate—have in common only that the central character in each is a woman and the ending sad. Mr. Bates is one of those professionals who show up how sloppily elaborate the narrative and descriptive writing in the artier forms of fiction have become, while he remains, for all his success, firmly on the right side of the line that separates the literary from the commercial. He really is the kind of writer that people keep claiming to have discovered Mr. Maugham to be.

These tales are not Mr. Bates at his best. They do not cover any very new ground, though "Summer in Salandar" is a good variation on an old theme; but they are diverse, interesting and vivid and full of the horror that results from careful examination of human character. Mr. Bates manages to continue describing things seen without either resorting to *outré* comparison or becoming monotonous. He is within the great tradition of English landscape painting.

R. G. G. P.

**The English Empress.** Egon Caesar Conte Corti. *Cassell*, 42/-

The biographical cachet of the Empress Frederick of Germany is in the ascendant. Within two years we have been treated to a selection from her letters and one short biographical study. Now to add more controversy to a fascinating "if only" historical story is Count Corti's detailed examination of the varied circumstances and conflicting temperaments of those celebrated Royalties (Queen Victoria, Albert, Prince Consort, and "Little Willie" playing leading roles)

whose ambitions influenced this defiantly English heroine-victim.

Helped in his research by many hitherto unpublished letters and documents from the Windsor archives, Count Corti has produced a fat, slightly Germanic, panoramic *roman d'histoire* featuring this most individual of English expatriates. The Empress's ferocious account of her sufferings, published here for the first time, most efficiently illustrates why she was such a thorn in Bismarck's flesh. If the Emperor Frederick had not died in his prime, if Willie had not hated his mother so much, if Queen Victoria had not been so keen to separate a devoted daughter from her loving father, if and more, posterity would have lost one of its most attractive historical personal tragedies, because a happy Empress Frederick would hardly interest us at all, which is why all reference to her sad obstinacies and misfortunes makes such entertaining reading.

K. D.

### AT THE PLAY



*Camino Real* (PHOENIX)

*The Entertainer*

(ROYAL COURT)

*Comedy in Music* (PALACE)

*Henry V* (SLOANE SCHOOL)

ONLY a mouse-sized meaning comes out of *Camino Real's* rather pretentious mountain of fantasy and symbolism. Tennessee Williams, who sees no joy in the present and certainly

none in the future, seems to be saying that the bitter futility of life is made faintly tolerable only by the illusions of romance; but he says it in such a determinedly disconnected way that one cannot be sure. *Camino Real* is another of the black-edged and strictly minority reports which are so fashionable at the moment that we are driven to wonder if the moderate contentment of the average man is not after all a shameful symptom of some gigantic lunacy.

It takes place noisily in the square of a seedy and vicious town, half Spanish, half American, a kind of crazy limbo where the dregs of the earth, menaced by trigger-happy soldiers and itinerant scavengers from the morgue, mingle in a human compost with such notable lovers as Casanova, Marguerite Gauthier and Byron, on ticket-on-leave and, though understandably faded, still sadly on the tiles. Escape is rare, the morgue greedy. Occasionally the pieces in Mr. Williams' kaleidoscope form a recognizable pattern, but briefly, to be broken sometimes by what is nothing more than a revue sketch. This is a new variation of his sordid-wistful formula. The characters are treated in such a fragmentary fashion that no firm idea comes through, and the fact that the whole assembly of odds and ends is dreamed by Don Quixote scarcely helps.

Peter Hall's production, both ingenious and restrained, is far the most interesting part of the evening, and gives a play which appears flabby in thought

at least a striking physical vitality. Opportunities for acting are limited, but a cast which includes Diana Wynyard, Harry Andrews, Elizabeth Seal, Freda Jackson, Denholm Elliott and Robert Hardy, gropes gallantly, at times brilliantly.

*The Entertainer* is a much better play than *Look Back in Anger*, because the defiantly adolescent note of whining self-pity has given way to a wider view of life. John Osborne still seems to confuse success with villainy, but in this study of a gin-soaked music-hall family at the end of its tether there is compassion as well as a sense of the dramatic. And for Laurence Olivier there is a fat and novel part as a battered comedian, drunken, lecherous and feckless, going through his miserable routine while his debtors close in. We see him on the stage of the local hall, his accent, his dancing, even his grubby jokes all falling flat; and we see him at home, broken by a son's death but ginning himself up to deal brutally with his hysterical wife and to go on trying desperately to get by, with a terrible forced gaiety. The part is perceptively written, until the end, when the whole play loses grip in sentiment, and Sir Laurence, whose coarsening of himself is a major feat, manages it astonishingly.

Shabby, pathetic, by turns tender and scrapping madly, the family, heading eagerly for cirrhosis, is drawn with varying power. The nostalgic grandfather, himself an old actor, has kept his dignity and is played charmingly by George Relph. As the comedian's wife, worn out but with shreds of her attraction still lingering, Brenda de Banzie gives a touching performance, and Richard Pasco is almost incandescent as the embittered (but not self-pitying) son. His sister, the normal member of the family, allows only a very short rope to Dorothy Tutin's talent.

A rambling and repetitive play, stronger in atmosphere than shape, but it marks a step forward for Mr. Osborne, whose writing is good enough to take him still farther.

I have always felt it the duty of a critic to report the misting of his spectacles by tears of laughter. This is a rare experience, but it happened to me twice with Victor Borge, whose mockery of his own skill at the piano is about the funniest thing in London. Immensely courteous, in beautiful tails, and with a total irreverence for the masters of music, he divides the evening between a dazzling display of his own peculiar accomplishments and a deadpan commentary in agreeably Danish American in which a pretty use of words achieves the utmost inconsequence. Apart from the piano his main property is a portable microphone which has to be solemnly adjusted every time he speaks; on his way to the piano he comes back half a dozen times to the footlights to add a little more to some



[The Entertainer]

Archie Rice—LAURENCE OLIVIER



slander on the great or some absurd account of his early life. Given a list of tunes by the audience he welds them into a long flourishing piece of his own. Playing Liszt's *Liebestraum* he nearly falls off his stool with boredom, murmuring "I hate it!" He plays so charmingly when he is serious that his tricks can be a little frustrating, but really I have no complaint.

Only lack of space forbids the longer notice deserved by the latest Shakespeare production by Guy Boas at the Sloane School. *Henry V* is a stiff test for boys, but it was met with liveliness and vigour, and as the King Gordon Mason spoke excellently and had a contemplative quality rare in so young an actor.

### Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

*As You Like It* (Stratford-on-Avon—10/4/57), a delightful production. *The Country Wife* (Chelsea Palace—19/12/56), honest bawdry. *At the Drop of a Hat* (Fortune—16/1/57), sparkling two-man revue.

ERIC KEOWN



## AT THE PICTURES

*Yangtse Incident—Interpol*

IT gets harder and harder to find anything fresh to say about the British great-naval-occasion film, just as it must be getting harder and harder to find anything fresh to put in it; but the new example, *Yangtse Incident* (Director: Michael Anderson), is a special case.

For one thing the war is a different war, and the other side is represented not by another ship but by shore batteries on the north bank of the Yangtse in 1949. The film opens as *H.M.S. Amethyst* is steaming up-river on simple, unwarlike duty. The Korean war is going on, but she is not involved. We get in a succession of glimpses a picture of the way everything on board is proceeding quietly and normally: men about their ordinary jobs are exchanging a word or two, an enormous lump of meat is being put into an oven below...

Then suddenly chaos, as the shore batteries open fire. The unbelievable shock of the attack in the middle of everyday routine is put over admirably—and this is another unaccustomed effect, for in the earlier naval films the ships' companies at least knew that they might at any moment be called upon to fight.

The centre, the core of the story covers the three months during which the *Amethyst*, with the remains of her crew, was a prisoner in the Yangtse, cut off from any relief and refused permission to move until her new commander, Lieutenant-Commander Kerans, should agree to the publication of a statement to the effect that his ship had started the whole trouble by firing at the shore. All supplies grew short, the ship baked in the sun, the men's health and morale



[*Yangtse Incident*

Leading Seaman (acting-impostor-Lieutenant) Frank—WILLIAM HARTNELL

suffered, and the whole time Kerans was in negotiation with the local Communist boss, Colonel Peng, and refusing to sign the lie that would release his ship.

Comparatively conventional as these scenes of argument may be (and Akim Tamiroff as Colonel Peng recalls all the oriental villains in fiction), they have an extraordinary grip. When one is deeply committed to belief in one side or the other, listening to and watching an argument is no less compelling than being in it oneself.

The climax is the escape. We see Kerans planning it: alone in his cabin he draws on a silhouette of the ship the camouflage that will be necessary—dead silence but for the slight rasp of his pencil. Then comes the great period of suspense as the ship moves (a strangely affecting moment) and steals down the river in the dark, past incalculable dangers, to the point south of Woosung where he can breathe again and send his famous signal of achievement.

All the people are convincingly played. Richard Todd as Kerans is naturally the dominating figure; one or two others—Donald Houston as "Number One," Ray Jackson as the hard-driven telegraphist, William Hartnell as the pawky coxswain to provide the occasional laugh on which the audience seizes eagerly—make an individual impression, but the enormous cast as a whole may simply be complimented on the appearance of reality.

The basic trouble about *Interpol* (Director: John Gilling), the whole point of which is, of course, to switch from country to country and show scenes

all over the place ("Ask Paris," says London telephoning to, I think, Rome, "to tell Athens that Charles Sturgis is arriving")—the basic trouble is that as it is for an English-speaking audience, all the dialogue has to be in English with the appropriate more or less heavy accent.

However, speech is one of the less important features of this piece. There are several violent deaths (one before the credit titles), one or two violent fights, the obligatory chase across roofs (I forget the particular country that was in), several gun battles, and other animated proceedings as the International Police Organization (personified by Victor Mature) hunts down a gang of dope-peddlers (personified by Trevor Howard). It's all good rousing stuff, but the most entertaining character is Bonar Colleano as a garrulous American hawker in Rome.

### Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Another shown this week was *Sea Wife*: uneasily emotional stuff about four shipwrecked survivors including a nun who inexplicably refuses to tell the others she is a nun. Moments of excellent detail, but it won't do. Outstanding in London is the new one, the Italian documentary *The Lost Continent*; review next week. The Van Gogh story *Lust for Life* (20/3/57) and the third "doctor" piece *Doctor at Large* (20/3/57) continue.

Top release is *Anastasia* (6/3/57). Others of which I thought well are two suspense stories reviewed here together (27/3/57): *Fortune is a Woman*, and the more conventional *Julie*.

RICHARD MAILETT



## ON THE AIR

## Uplift Limited

**D**R. BRONOWSKI's withdrawal from the panel of the B.B.C.'s television "Brains Trust" has touched off more discussion than any question ever put to the illustrious clutches of egg-heads. The rights and wrongs of the affair seem to me well worth considering.

It is fair to assume that the learned doctor's decision was taken only after a careful analysis of all the facts, principles and penumbral persuasions relevant to the Case of the New Chairman. After all, this is the method, the scientific method, that Dr. Bronowski has laboured for so long to put across on the little screen. He is, as the chairman has so regularly reminded us, a distinguished scientist, physicist, mathematician, philosopher, writer and poet. His approach is rational, materialist and humanitarian. On the command "Bronowski?" a smirk of obvious satisfaction settles on his features. Three seconds of pregnant silence and then the answer rolls forth. Invariably it is fitted out like a legal document with every clause and rider in place.

He explains what the rest of the panel have been trying to say ("What Dr. Huxley meant of course was . . ."), demolishes any argument that does not strictly conform to the pattern of his highly efficient thought processes, restates the problem and the answer in precise terms, and decorates the scholarly beneficence with an apt quotation or an amusing anecdote.

Sometimes I find him infuriatingly doctrinaire and fussy, but on the whole he gives excellent value. He is brainy,



[The Brains Trust]

DR. BRONOWSKI

BERNARD BRADEN

provoking, stimulating, and the "Brains Trust" will be the poorer without him.

His resignation coincides with the appointment of Bernard Braden as chairman. He does not object to the Canadian actor-comedian on personal or professional grounds, but—"if the audience tunes in for reasons which make it impossible for serious discussion to take place, then I can't take part." In other words he is protesting against the B.B.C.'s attempt to sugar the pill, to lure more viewers to the session of cerebration by employing popular barkers.

I too have nothing against Bernard Braden—one of the most intelligent of our aerial comics—and it is only a mild criticism of his appointment that he adds yet another transatlantic accent to the weekly blare of compères, chairmen, commentators, interviewers and disc-jockeys. But like Bronowski I am worried by the B.B.C.'s growing tendency to adulterate its better wines in the hope

that they will "go further." There are very few screened programmes that reach up to sixth form and university levels of intelligence: ninety per cent of the curriculum (all Channels) is beamed at tired business men, tired housewives, goggle-eyed adolescents or primary school delinquents, and it is not asking too much on behalf of the serious-minded minority to expect delivery of its meagre rations without noxious additives.

Some educationists, no doubt, will reply that ends justify means, that gimmicks, sugar-coating and adulteration are all excusable if the result is a wider distribution of mental uplift. And perhaps they are right. My own view, however, is that the rations are too fragile to withstand the

manipulative enthusiasm of the popularizers. Why not leave the "Brains Trust" alone? There is room for a little cerebration in such enormously popular shows as "What's My Line?" "Is This Your Problem?" and "This Is Your Life?" They could absorb it without anyone being any the wiser.

It is good to see "Titlark" back again. This peculiarly British brand of humour (dignity and impudence) offers welcome relief from the eternal round of wisecracks à l'Américaine and native vulgarity à la B.B.C. Bernard Miles is a fine character actor and he obviously enjoys every minute in his guise of the happy snook-cocking ne'er-do-well.

BERNARD HOLLOWOOD

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DOUGLAS.

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